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Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:
Do you agree that installing power poles in Marpi will destroy the tourist spot's natural beauty?

Let your voice be heard!
Go to
www.saipantribune.com
to cast your vote.

INSIDE

Radioactive Seawater
Highly radioactive iodine seeping from Japan's damaged nuclear complex may be making its way into seawater.

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Air Strikes
International air raids target Moammar Gadhafi's hometown of Sirte for the first time.

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Autism Film
For those with autism, the documentary "Wretches and Jabberers" offers new hope.

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17 SSHS students pass national IT certification in Guam. PAGE 5
DPH says about 40 follow-up cases on hold for treatment. PAGE 6

CUC emergency declaration lifted

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

After more than two years of operating under the administration's watch, the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. will now function as an independent agency after Gov. Benigno R. Fitial lifted the emergency status of the utilities firm yesterday.

The Fitial administration first placed CUC under emergency status on Aug. 1, 2008, to enable it to skirt procurement and other laws to solve rolling blackouts and imminent power generation failure. CUC entered its 31st month under a state

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Candidates for NMC prexy down to 3

» Adams backs out from race

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

One of the top candidates for the presidency of the Northern Marianas College has backed out, leaving only two contenders for the post.

Highly placed sources told *Saipan Tribune* that Dr. Christa Adams withdrew her application over the weekend, citing "personal" reasons.

Adams is the former president of Owens Community College in Ohio. According to college sources, she received the highest rating from the NMC Board of Regents during their interview.

At their last meeting, board chair

See CANDIDATES on Page 4

IMPROVED MARINA
Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, center, leads the ribbon-cutting for the newly improved Smiling Cove Marina yesterday, while inset shows Rev. Father Jesse T. Reyes blessing the floating marina with holy water. What was once a marina with floating docks patched with plywood to cover broken sections is now a much safer and better facility, thanks to a federally-funded rehabilitation contract totaling $1.266 million. HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

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Petition vs power poles in Marpi launched

» Admin says these are temporary structures

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

An online petition was launched yesterday against the installation of power poles in Marpi that some residents say will destroy the tourist spot's natural beauty.

ON THE NET
http://www.thepetitionsite.com/1/keep-marpi-beautiful-----for-tourists-and-residents-alike/

But the Fitial administration said these are not permanent structures and can always be changed when needed, including when alternative power sources become available for the

See PETITION on Page 4

Fitial: DPS, Corrections merger again

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

» Governor weighs in on Judge Manglona's replacement

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial said yesterday he is considering the merger of the departments of Public Safety and Corrections for efficiency and cost effectiveness—seven years since his predecessor separated the two.

Fitial said the two departments, once merged, will be headed by a commissioner, who would likely be acting DPS commissioner Ray Mafnas.

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Local

Fitial nixes bill amending ETC program

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Citing further loss to government revenue and inappropriateness of the funding mechanism, Gov. Benigno R. Fitial vetoed Friday a bill that would include the CNMI Scholarship Office and three municipal scholarships as qualified educational institutions under the educational tax credit program.

Fitial said the bill, if approved, will result in "further loss to the CNMI general revenues, which have been declining at an alarming rate."

He said the current revenue sources barely sustain the various government programs, and to approve Senate Bill 17-24, House Draft 1 "will further cripple the services" provided residents.

Taxpayers donate an average of $1 million annually to educational institutions.

In addition to lost revenue, Fitial said the mechanism by which the Legislature aims to increase funding to scholarship programs is "inappropriate."

"This legislation creates uncertainty in funding each year, which would make it difficult for the scholarship administrators to accurately distribute award," the governor said in his veto message to legislative leaders.

Fitial said the "appropriate" method would be by way of appropriation in the annual budget act.

SB 17-24, HD1, authored by Sen. Juan Ayuyu (Ind-Rota) and Senate floor leader Pete P. Reyes (R-Saipan), adds four entities to the list of qualified educational institution under the educational tax credit program.

These proposed additions are the CNMI Scholarship Office, the Rota Municipal Scholarship, the Tinian Municipal Scholarship, and the Saipan Higher Educational Financial Assistance.

Under current law, only six entities/groups are qualified for the educational tax credit program.

These are the Public School System, Northern Marianas College, the Commonwealth Museum of History and Culture, the NMI Council for the Humanities, the Northern Marianas Trade Institute, and an educational institution located in the CNMI that has been issued a letter of determination granting tax exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRC.

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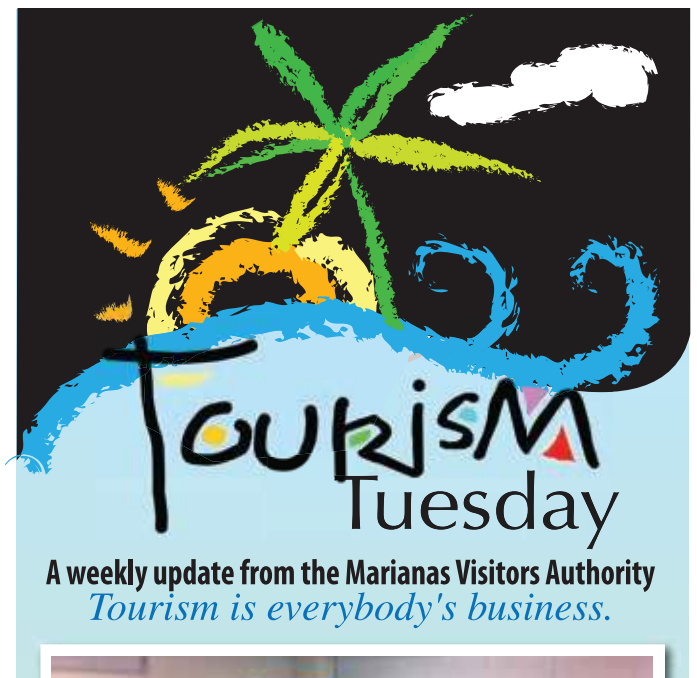

Overseas Educational Seminar in Osaka

In a continuing bid to promote educational tourism, the **Marianas Visitors Authority** and **Asiana Airlines** joined the **Overseas Educational Seminar** on Feb. 24, 2010, in Osaka in order to increase school trips and group bookings from the secondary city.

The MVA and Asiana Airlines hosted a promotional booth at the seminar to distribute destination brochures. In addition, the MVA delivered a more detailed presentation to 12 participating travel agents, introducing general travel information on **Saipan, Tinian** and **Rota** with emphasis on selling points for school and group trips. School trip manuals were also distributed. Representatives from Meanwhile, Asiana Airlines provided details of flight service between Osaka and the Northern Marianas.

Last year, the MVA also attended overseas school trip seminars in Nagoya and Hiroshima.

Meanwhile, the Northern Marianas is anticipating a decline in visitor arrivals from Japan this year following this month's deadly earthquake.

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This Tourism Tuesday space is provided by Saipan Tribune

'Kaipat resigned due to health reasons'

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial disclosed yesterday that Cinta Kaipat resigned as deputy secretary of the Department of Labor because of her health.

"She wants to take care of her health so I respect that," Fitial told the media.

The governor expressed hope that Kaipat will recover from whatever health issues she may have so that she can return and continue helping his administration.

Kaipat, author of the controversial labor reform law when she was still a House member, left Labor in late February.

Press secretary Angel Demapan told *Saipan Tribune* last week that, back in February 2011, Kaipat had told Fitial and Lt. Gov. Eloy Inos about her need to go on an extended leave of absence to "tend to other matters and pursuits."

Kaipat lost her re-election bid as representative of Precinct 1 during the November 2007 election. In February 2008, Fitial appointed her as Labor's deputy secretary.

A family member told *Saipan Tribune* on Sunday that Kaipat is currently on a personal trip to the Philippines.

Fitial described the former deputy secretary as "a very, very hard worker."

Fitial said he still hasn't decided yet whether to appoint a new deputy secretary, considering that Labor's workforce has been reduced. "Maybe we don't need to replace her," he added. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Man allegedly repeatedly punches son

A man allegedly repeatedly punched his son after the boy tried to stop him from beating up his wife at their home in Dandan early Saturday morning.

Sumit Dhakal, 29, was arrested for assault with a dangerous weapon, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace. Bail was set at $1,500 cash.

The boy sustained a bloody nose. His mother had a cut on her left foot.

Detective Catherine B. Pangelinan stated in her report that police officers had gone to Dhakal's residence on Saturday at 6:13am after the Department of Public Safety received a call about a domestic violence incident.

Pangelinan said that patrol officer Rick Reyes saw blood on the chest of the suspect's wife and she told the officer it belonged to their son.

The wife allegedly sustained the cut on her foot after Dhakal broke a shelf and threw a broken piece at her, hitting her left foot.

Hearing the noise, the son came into the room to stop his father but Dhakal allegedly punched the boy five times in the head and once in the face. The wife called the police. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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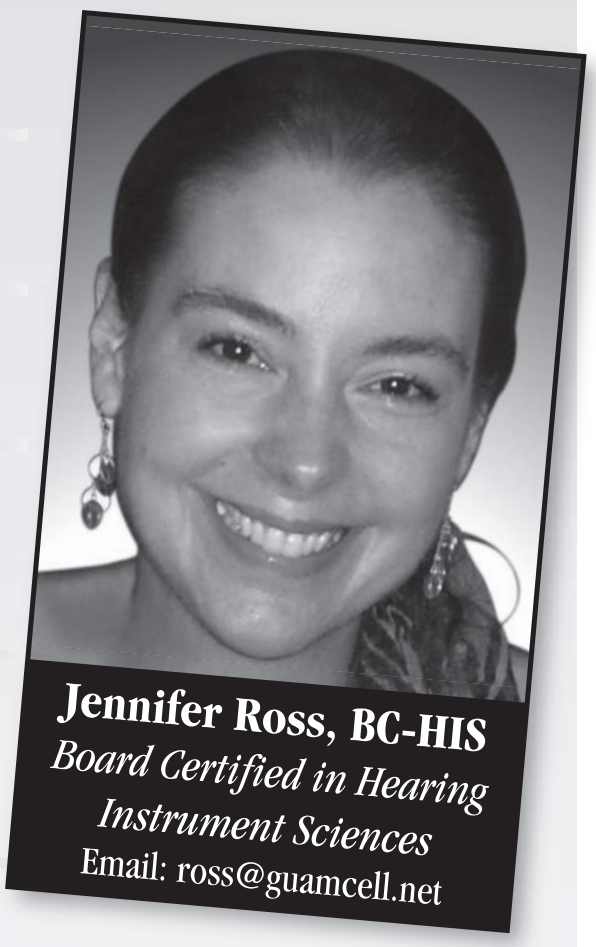

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Ms. Salome Castro, Nurse Supervisor & Chemotherapy Nurse at the Commonwealth Health Center, and Dr. Jack Hardy, Senior Advisor for the Commonwealth Cancer Association, will be presenting information from the Caregiving Workshop they attended in Palau in February, including tips for conducting or facilitating support meetings. Their presentation will be followed by break-out discussions for survivors and family members/caregivers only.

For more information or to RSVP, contact the Commonwealth Cancer Association at 682-0050 or email cca@ccamarianas.org, or the Comprehensive Cancer Control Program at 236-8728.

This ad is brought to you by the Department of Public Health Comprehensive Cancer Control Program with 100% funding from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

New marijuana legalization bill

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Rep. Stanley Torres (Ind-Saipan) introduced on the House floor yesterday a bill seeking to legalize marijuana use in the CNMI for medical and recreational use, barely four months since the Senate killed his previous proposal of the same nature.

"The legalization, regulation, and taxation of cannabis in the Commonwealth will be the best marijuana law in America," Torres said in a privilege speech at the House session.

Torres said he "candidly admit[s]" that his primary reason for introducing the bill is to tax and regulate marijuana transactions in the CNMI, which is in dire financial need.

Other House members said they are either still opposed to a marijuana bill or haven't fully read Torres' new bill.

Torres' House Bill 17-175 or the Legalization, Regulation and Taxation of Cannabis Act of 2011 allows people at least 21 years old to possess, cultivate, or transport marijuana for personal use.

It also permits the regulation and taxation of the commercial production and sale of marijuana to people 21 years old or older.

The bill, however, prohibits the possession of marijuana on school grounds and bans the use of marijuana while minors are present.

He said the time has come to decriminalize marijuana to the lowest level of misdemeanor crime that can be committed within the CNMI.

Rep. Frank Dela Cruz (R-Saipan), one of the seven House members who voted "no" to Torres' previous marijuana legalization bill, said he is opposed to any type of marijuana legalization legislation, "whether for medicinal purpose or other purposes."

"I don't believe that this is a legislation we need at this time to turn our economy around. I will not support the legislation," he told *Saipan Tribune* in an interview.

House floor leader George Camacho (Ind-Saipan) said his vote on the marijuana bill will remain the same—"no."

House minority leader Diego Benavente (R-Saipan), who previously approved Torres' marijuana bill that the Senate rejected, said he has not decided yet whether to also support the new marijuana bill.

"Senate already rejected the marijuana bill. I don't see the need to continue introducing something that's not going to pass. We should not waste our time on this," he added.

Rep. Trenton Conner (R-Tinian), who voted "yes" on the first marijuana bill, said he has yet to get a copy of the latest bill so he can't comment on it.

'I'm the rule'

Instead of reading his 10-page privilege speech on his new marijuana legislation, Torres instead passed out copies of his speech, concerned that his colleagues will also shut him off the way they did with Rep. Froilan Tenorio (Cov-Saipan) when he was introducing his two bills.

Tenorio spent time explaining the intent of his bill to repeal the Investment Incentive Act and to expand the hours of sale of alcohol in hotels and resorts.

Rep. Joseph Deleon Guerrero (R-Saipan) raised his hand to call the speaker's attention and said members should limit their statements to the introduction of their bills and not to discuss the merits of their bills.

Deleon Guerrero said there's a time for discussing each bill, and not during the introduction of bills.

Tenorio asked Deleon Guerrero to show him a provision in the House rule that says a member cannot discuss his bill during introduction.

At this point, Speaker Eli Cabrera (R-Saipan) said, "It's not in the rule because I am the rule."

PETITION

From Page 1

new Marpi public cemetery and the Veterans Cemetery.

The power poles are being put up from the temple to the cemeteries in Marpi to supply power mainly to the two cemeteries.

Attorney David Banes of O'Connor, Berman, Dotts & Banes, who created the online petition, said the government should have considered alternative power methods such as a standalone power generator or the installation of solar or wind power, so that there won't be a need to put up power poles.

"The Marpi area is one of the last untouched pristine areas here and the power poles are going to destroy that," Banes told *Saipan Tribune* in a phone interview.

The petition can be viewed at http://www.thepetitionsite.com/1/keep-marpi-beautiful-----for-tourists-and-residents-alike/.

Banes said the petition is a community-based effort to "save" the beauty of Marpi.

"Marpi is not only popular with residents, it is a favorite tourist spot as well—and right now with our economy the way it is, let's keep the tourists coming here and admiring our natural beauty. In addition to signing this petition, we would also love for you to write letters to the editors and governor," the petition partly reads.

Over a dozen individuals have already signed up the petition as of yesterday afternoon.

Former representative Tina Sablan, one of the petitioners, said "Marpi should be kept beautiful and protected because it is "one of the most naturally beautiful, most historically rich, and most culturally significant places in the Northern Mariana Islands."

A few power poles have been put up on the side of the road, and petitioners say these "would hurt the best view."

Press secretary Angel Demapan, when asked for comment, said that, while the Fitial administration is aware of these concerns, "we must also take into account the need to supply power to the soon-to-be-completed public cemetery, which will house a memorial service hall and public restrooms."

He said at the present time, there are no available restrooms in the area and this has also been one of the major concerns raised by people who have attended burial services at the Veterans Cemetery, next to the new public cemetery.

Demapan said the government continues to pursue a transition of dependence from conventional energy to alternative or renewable energy.

"Once we have such options available here, then we may be able to revisit the power supply source to the cemeteries in Marpi," he said, adding that the power poles are "not permanent structures and can always be changed when the opportunity to do so exists."

The construction of the new Marpi public cemetery is expected to be completed in a few weeks.

CANDIDATES

From Page 1

Juan Lizama had said that the board has already selected a final candidate but they were withholding the person's identity pending the results of the criminal and financial investigations being conducted by Association of Community College Trustees.

Sources independently said that because of her high rating, board members have already considered naming Adams as the next NMC president and were just waiting for the result of the investigation before a contract is offered.

With the withdrawal of Adams, only Drs. Jeff Armstrong and Sharon Hart remain as candidates for the NMC presidency.

Armstrong is the interim president of Muscatine Community College in Iowa, while Hart is the current deputy president of University College of Caribbean in Jamaica.

Based on available data from the Internet, Armstrong has a bachelor's degree in English from the University of Iowa, a master's degree in instructional design and technology from the same university, and a doctorate in social foundations of education, also from the University of Iowa.

Based also on available data on the Web, Hart obtained her doctorate from the University of Illinois and studied at Harvard University after completing her doctorate. She also served as president of North Dakota State College of Science, president of Middlesex Community College in Connecticut, and vice president for academic and student affairs at North-Central Technical College in Wisconsin.

'Chairman's statement'

Lizama affirmed the withdrawal of one candidate in a statement yesterday, but he did not identify who he or she was.

"The NMC Board of Regents today announced that the top candidate it had selected to advance to the final stages of the presidential search has decided to withdraw from the search process," said Lizama in the statement, adding that finding the best president for the college remains the regents' chief priority at this time.

Although the candidate's withdrawal presents a temporary setback to the search process, Lizama said "the regents have other viable options and will be discussing these in the next few days. We are still very much committed to selecting a president expeditiously and without unnecessary delay."

Lizama's statement did not indicate the specific reason for the candidate's withdrawal, citing concerns for the candidate's privacy.

He said other candidates recommended by the Presidential Search Committee are still under consideration.

NMC has had no permanent president since January 2010 when Dr. Carmen Fernandez was suspended and later terminated from her post. A lawsuit is pending in court.

MERGER

From Page 1

The governor said that Mafnas, who replaced Santiago Tudela as DPS commissioner two weeks ago, "has proven himself to be a good manager."

Mafnas' appointment to DPS still needs the advice and consent of the full Senate.

"He has improved the Department of Corrections to a level that, to tell you the truth, I never expected him to improve DOC but he did it, okay?" Fitial said in an interview at the ribbon-cutting of the improved Smiling Cove Marina yesterday.

Mafnas was Fitial's senior adviser before his appointment as Corrections commissioner, and then as acting DPS commissioner, a post he had already held years back.

"I'm very proud to say this. He's good and he's very objective. He's not political. He knows his staff. He knows all the workings of public safety and especially corrections," Fitial added.

Former governor Juan N. Babauta created the Department of Corrections as a separate department from DPS on Aug. 20, 2004.

House minority leader Diego Benavente (R-Saipan), who was Babauta's lieutenant governor, said yesterday that Fitial is on the right track to merge the two agencies again because the consent decree that led to the prison being built has long been addressed.

"We're a small community and I agree with the governor's plan to merge the two. That agency could be headed by one commissioner and two directors to head the police and corrections," Benavente said.

Fitial said the merger will create a positive impact on the CNMI government.

"Cost saving, guaranteed. Efficiency? That's what they're going to be working toward, making the department more efficient," Fitial added.

Corrections officer Arnold Seman is currently the acting corrections chief.

The governor said Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos is also looking at the merger of the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs and other smaller agencies or offices with similar functions related to "cultural and community" activities and programs, some of them under the Office of the Governor.

This was one of the recommendations of independent firm Management Analysis Inc., which conducted a desk audit on DCCA and DPS.

Who's the next judge?

Fitial said he has already been considering individuals to replace CNMI Superior Court associate judge Ramona V. Manglona, once the U.S. Senate confirms her nomination as U.S. District Court judge for the Northern Mariana Islands.

"I have to be ready in the event that Judge Manglona gets confirmed so by saying I have to be ready, I'm already considering people," he said.

The governor declined to identify his possible candidates, other than saying they are "all locals."

He said he has not received any official or formal recommendation for appointment.

When asked whether he thinks there's really a need to fill the vacancy, Fitial said he has not given the idea a thought yet.

"I haven't given that a thought but if I ever receive an official communication from the court that would say that I don't need to appoint a replacement, I will let you know," he told reporters.

CUC

From Page 1

of emergency last month.

Yesterday, Fitial said it is time to end CUC's emergency status, pointing out the many improvements in its management and operation in the last two years.

"CUC has made tremendous progress over the last several months. While there are challenges ahead, they don't fit the category of an 'emergency' so I have decided to end the issuance of emergency orders," said the governor yesterday.

The end of the emergency declaration coincides with significant progress and collaboration between CUC and federal agencies, specifically the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Justice.

The governor cited the recent $2.1 million grant awarded CUC by Insular Affairs assistant secretary Anthony Babauta.

"This is critically needed support. I thank EPA staff member Michelle Rogow for her utmost support in helping the CNMI get these funds," said Fitial.

The governor described the CUC pipeline project as a longstanding need for the utilities firm. Its completion, he said, should happen within the next year and is accompanied by work to prevent spillage into the environment as well as to continue improvements in the areas of water and power production.

"CUC executive director Abe Utu Malae has a tough job to do, but he is doing an excellent job leading the CUC team. In recognition of this improvement, it is appropriate to celebrate the end of the CUC's emergency status," added the governor.

'A good thing'

Malae welcomed the governor's decision, describing it as a good thing for the agency.

"It is a good thing to lift the emergency order and to work on a more permanent solution to two issues: skilled non-technical workers to help run the utility; and secondly, managing and governing CUC without a board of directors," said Malae.

He said the trouble with the emergency order is that CUC was almost obliged to emphasize the problems, rather than point out solutions and successes.

"We have to get out of that mode or we will become schizophrenic," said Malae.

He said that hiring nonresident workers is a serious issue for CUC because the law limits the agency to just up to 30 non-U.S. personnel.

"It is not just the technical skilled workers at the power plant that we have to attract; even accountants are hard to find. If you do not have the engineering and accounting staff to manage all the capital improvement projects for example, you can run into an awful lot of problem. Your scope of work can be botched or the reimbursement requests to the grantors can be rejected," added Malae.

The lifting of the emergency status means procurement rules now apply at CUC.

17 SSHS students pass national IT certification in Guam

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Seventeen students from Saipan Southern High School recently passed a national information technology certification in Guam, bringing the school's total number of certified students to 24.

Saipan Southern has been bringing students to Guam in the last four years to take the CompTIA A+ Certification, a nationally recognized certification for IT professionals, at the Guam Community College.

This year, 20 students from 9th to 12th grades were selected to take the certification exams; 17 passed. Last school year, seven Saipan Southern High students made it.

The 17 students who passed the IT certification are Jhonlyn Chong, Charles Sumor, Melvin Castro, Dave Lizama, Tristan Ecalnea, Brandon Lieto, Weilly Brana, Manuelito Rey, Franklin Macahito, Aderwyn Gomez, Jenny Sanchez, Geovannie Santos, Marie Del Carmen, Jatanna Cabrera, Rose Lizama, Allysha Lloren, and Kimberly Phan.

Instructor James Lizama, himself a CompTIA certified professional and a Microsoft-certified systems engineer and administrator, said the students worked hard and put in a lot of time to prepare for the exam.

"I am so proud of these kids for doing something that nobody in this island has done in the high school level. We are the only school in the Marianas that has this kind of program, which allows our high school students to be CompTIA certified," he added.

Saipan Southern High is a member of CompTIA Education to Careers Program. CompTIA, which stands for Computer Technology Industry Association, is a thriving community of organizations throughout the IT channel, including vendors, resellers, distributors, and educators.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The 17 students from Saipan Southern High School who recently passed the IT professional certification in Guam. Back row, from left, instructor James Lizama, Jhonlyn Chong, Charles Sumor, Melvin Castro, Dave Lizama, Tristan Ecalnea, Brandon Lieto, Weilly Brana, Manuelito Rey, and Franklin Macahito. Front row: Aderwyn Gomez, Jenny Sanchez, Geovannie Santos, Marie Del Carmen, Jatanna Cabrera, Rose Lizama, Allysha Lloren, and Kimberly Phan.

"By being certified, these students are now CompTIA A+ Certified Professionals and are competent to do installation, preventative maintenance, networking, security and troubleshooting. They also have excellent customer service and communication skills to work with clients. They are one of the more than 700,000 people worldwide that have become CompTIA A+ certified since the program's inception in 1993," Lizama told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

The students that were selected to take the certification exams are from the school's InfoTech Class.

Accomplishment

"I never thought that I would even get chosen to go to Guam. We were given two months of lectures and files to study for the certification. I couldn't help but smile because all the hard work actually paid off in the end. All I tried to keep in my head was that I am actually certified," said Mariel Del Carmen.

Jatanna Cabrera gets a sense of accomplishment. "I felt I had accomplished something really big in my life and I am proud of myself. My teacher was also the biggest help in this. He pushed me to study, study and study. He believed in me and he knew that I could do it."

Dave Lizama, a sophomore, said: "Passing the exams was a complete blessing for me. It gave me a lot of confidence that I can do things with hard work."

For Jhonlyn Chong, all the hard work paid off. "It has given me a lot of confidence."

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Smiling Cove Marina rehabilitation project now complete

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
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REPORTER

Boaters and fishing enthusiasts will now enjoy a better and improved Smiling Cove Marina after its rehabilitation was officially completed.

Government officials and representatives of Guam Pacific Power Corp., the project contractor, led the ribbon cutting ceremony that marked the completion and turnover of the $1.1 million rehabilitation project yesterday morning.

"After just six months of intensive work, we now have this modern, state-of-the-art floating dock facility for our community," said Gov. Benigno R. Fitial.

Fitial recounted that the Smiling Cove Marina was the first of its kind to be built on Saipan, with about 80 boat slips to service some 500 boaters.

"Over the years, we saw such heavy demand and a busy utilization of the dock. This resulted in a rapid deterioration of the original facility," he said, prompting the Department of Lands & Natural Resources to submit a request for its rehabilitation.

Fitial said the project, which was fully funded by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Sportsfish Restoration's Boating Access Program, is another testament to the administration's commitment to maximize available funding sources for the benefit of the CNMI.

"I urge everyone to use this facility with care so that our future generation may be able to reap the benefits of this worthy development," he said, adding that the project is dedicated to fishermen, boaters, recreational fishing enthusiasts, and sports fishers on island.

Dennis Tupas, GPPC engineer in charge of the project, said the rehabilitation project involved the replacement of the dilapidated Styrofoam-lined plastic decks with composite plastic marine-grade decks with aluminum frames.

The marine supplies and materials for the project were sourced out from Blue Water Company in Honolulu.

"The project was right on schedule. It took about six months for the project to completed," Tupas said, adding that their workers wrapped up their work on March 21.

DLNR Secretary Ignacio Dela Cruz said the work done by GPPC passed inspection by the agency's project management staff "without reservation." "We're very happy," he added.

Dela Cruz said the Smiling Cove Marina is now "a lot safer than it was before."

"Since the quality of materials used for the facility is a lot more improved, more sturdy and long lasting, the facility is going to serve our boaters for a long time," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

Dela Cruz noted that the project is also beneficial to the CNMI's tourism industry.

"A lot of the boaters who use the facility are recreational boaters, fishermen, and sports fishermen. Some of them have guests to take out to fish and enjoy themselves. So it's safe for the guests, the boaters, everyone," he added.

Sam Markos, a boater with two of his five boats regularly docked at the Marina, said the project benefits him and other boaters on island.

"We're very happy with it. It's easier to dock our boats now. It's more secure," he said.

Dela Cruz said they are now working on rehabilitating the transient dock as part of the project's change order "because there's a little bit of money left." This will cost around $60,000 to $70,000.

Tupas said they already started the fabrication and demolition phase and expect to finish the project in two to three weeks.

DPH says about 40 follow-up cases for treatment 'on hold'

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

About 30 to 40 patients scheduled for checkup off-island are currently on hold because of some $140,000 the medical referral program owes travel agencies, according to Department of Public Health Secretary Joseph Kevin Villagomez yesterday.

Since the latter part of 2010, Wings Travel, Pacific Sky, and World Tour and Travel have temporarily stopped processing tickets for medically referred patients until the government settles its obligation. This has resulted in the suspension of the CNMI's medical referral program.

For emergency cases, Villagomez said that DPH has been working with Freedom Air to transport patients to Guam.

"We are addressing emergency issues on case-by-case basis. In every emergency situations…we're scrutinizing the case and those who can wait obviously have to wait until we receive clearance from the Finance Department. Freedom Air is now servicing our emergency patients to Guam only," he said.

Villagomez said that DPH is more concerned with emergency patients who need to go to Manila or Honolulu for immediate treatment.

Saipan Tribune learned that DPH writes the travel request for emergency patients directly to Freedom Air. However, for Manila and Honolulu trips, a travel company needs to process the airline ticket for patients.

Self-pay

With the suspension of trips to off-island hospitals, Villagomez said that some families are opting to shoulder the expenses just so their patient could get the needed treatment.

"For follow up cases, some family members are opting to find their own means to travel. So we will work with them in addressing the logistics but not the travel part. We will also assist in making the appointments for them [in Manila and Hawaii]," said Villagomez.

Saipan Tribune learned that DPH has no offshore office and staff in Manila and services are being contracted to a company, unlike in Guam and Hawaii where the agency has its own medical referral office and staff.

With recent cuts in program benefits, Villagomez expects a reduction of about $1.8 million in the expenses of the medical referral program.

This program has been the government's largest expenditure over the years. DPH spent $16.3 million in referring medical cases to medical facilities outside the Commonwealth from fiscal years 2006 through 2009.

In FY 2010, the government spent more than $7 million—the largest sum ever due to more and more people dropping their medical insurance, forcing the government to shoulder a larger share of expenses.

Victim urges DPS to curb burglary cases on Saipan

A burglary victim urged the Department of Public Safety yesterday to do something to curb the rising break-ins on the island.

"We have so many burglary cases!" lamented Thomas K. Sablan.

Sablan told *Saipan Tribune* that his house on Capital Hill was burglarized between 8am to 1pm on Thursday by two suspects aboard a beige Toyota Camry.

He said the items stolen were an iPod Touch, two sets of diamond earrings, canned goods, a brown Buck knife, and new coins collection, with the total value of over $1,000.

Sablan said they discovered the break-in on Thursday when his wife and daughter arrived home after attending a funeral. At the time, Sablan said he was at work. DPS was immediately notified about the incident.

He said a neighbor had noticed a vehicle parked next to their house, but assumed that the occupants were family members.

He believes that one suspect served as a lookout, while the second one entered the house through the back door.

Sablan appealed to DPS and the public to help him find the burglars. He said the suspects would probably sell some of the stolen items—particularly the diamond earrings and the iPod Touch—to a pawnshop.

For information about the suspects or the stolen items, Sablan may be reached at 483-5298. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

APARTMENT AND CONDOMINIUM FOR RENT

SPRING PROMOTION
UNTIL MARCH 31, 2011 (FOR 1 YEAR CONTRACT)

GILL BLAS CONDOMINIUM
Location : GARAPAN, SAIPAN
Landmark : Where 747 Dining & Bar is situated
Price : 1 BEDROOM - ~~$650.00~~ From $500.00~
: 2 BEDROOMS - ~~$850.00~~ From $650.00~
Features : Free Moving Service, Furnished Unit, Back-up Generator, Laundry Facility, On-Duty Security Guard at Night, Swimming Pool, 24 Hour Water Supply • Power and Water excluded

PASTEL INN APARTMENT
Location : SAN JOSE, SAIPAN
Landmark : Right besides Roshi's Store
Price : STUDIO TYPE - ~~$350.00~~ From $250.00~
: 2 BEDROOMS - ~~$550.00~~ From $400.00~
: OFFICE SPACE (928 SQ. FT.) - ~~$1,000.00~~ From $700.00~
Features : Free Moving Service, Furnished Unit, Back-up Generator, Laundry Facility, Broad parking space, Spacious yard, Swimming Pool, 24 Hour Water Supply • Power and Water excluded

SEDA BLANCA APARTMENT
Location : GARAPAN, SAIPAN
Landmark : Close to 747 Dining & Bar
Room type : STUDIO-TYPE, and 1 BEDROOM
Price : ~~$450.00~~ From $350.00~
Features : Free Moving Service, Furnished Unit, Back-up Generator, Laundry Facility, 24 Hour Water Supply
Power and Water excluded

ANAKS OCEAN VIEW HILL SAIPAN
Location : PUERTO RICO, SAIPAN
Landmark : Close to Bank of Hawaii
Room type : 2 BEDROOMS AND 3 BEDROOMS
Price : ~~$1,500.00~~ From $1,200.00~
Features : Free Moving Service, Furnished Unit, Back-up Generator, Laundry & Dryer, Swimming Pool & Tennis Court, 24 Hour Fresh Water Supply • Power and Water excluded

YOUNGS BUILDING
Location : MIDDLE ROAD, SAIPAN
Landmark : Where Pacific Quick Print is situated
Area : 760 SQ. FT. (2nd FLOOR ONLY)
Price : $500.00~
Features : Parking Lot, Power and Water excluded

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We also accommodate Daily, Weekly or Monthly basis.

For further details: You can visit ATOM's CO., LTD. office, located in Garapan, Saipan.
Our office hour is 9:00 am to 6:00 pm on weekdays and 12:00 pm to 5:00 pm on weekends.
You can also contact us thru phone at 233-8880 or send us an e-mail at atoms@pticom.com

Cervical cancer is caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV).
The HPV vaccine can prevent cervical cancer.

We got vaccinated for HPV

Now it's your turn!

Department of Public Health HPV Vaccination team will be visiting High Schools and Jr. High Schools on these following dates:

- 8:30am - 12:00pm, March 29, 2011 - Kagman High School
- 12:30pm - 2:30pm, March 29, 2011 - Saipan Southern High School
- 8:30am - 12:00pm, March 30, 2011 - Hopwood Jr. High School
- 8:30am - 12:00pm, March 31, 2011 - Chacha Oceanview Jr. High School

CNMI Comprehensive Cancer Control Program
Division of Public Health • Health and Well Being • CNMI
Department of Public Health • Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Commonwealth Cancer Association • Awareness • Education • Hope
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Public School System

This ad is brought to you by the Department of Public Health Comprehensive Cancer Control Program with 100% funding from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Fund trims candidates for money managers to 20

»Investment portfolio at $318M as of March

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

From over 70 applicants, the NMI Retirement Fund board of trustees has narrowed to 20 its list of applicants for money managers. The remaining candidates will be interviewed next month.

Fund board chair Sixto Igisomar yesterday said the "shortlist" comprises firms that met the qualifications and threshold set by the Fund to manage its asset portfolio.

The Fund's assets are currently being handled by nine money managers.

Igisomar disclosed yesterday that of the remaining 20, the number will be further trimmed to about nine or 10 depending on the agency's need.

If the interview goes well, Igisomar is optimistic that a final selection will be made by end of next month.

"These 20 applicants are key to our allocation, they're more specialized in the areas we need. If the interview goes well, we may have a good standing list by end of April," he said.

Common stocks account for 65 percent of the Fund's assets; the rest are divided among fixed income, 27 percent; hedge fund, 6 percent; and money market, 2 percent.

Igisomar said the trustees are planning to reshuffle the Fund's asset allocations and that some of the Fund's current money managers may not be suitable for the new setup.

"With new categories, I know for a fact that only a few selected experts can actually handle those…so some current money managers may not qualify," he added.

The Fund hired Wilshire Consulting in September last year to replace Merrill Lynch as its primary investment consultant.

The board recently adopted a moderate-alternative approach toward its investments. This involves a "more gutsy" effort that seeks to obtain a higher return but is a bit riskier. The board had described this approach as "safe" for the Fund.

$318M portfolio as of March

As of this month, the Fund's unaudited portfolio was valued at $318 million—excluding the agency's local investments—showing a slight dip from the $320 million recorded in January 2011.

The "slight" loss was due to a dip in the market and the drawdown incurred by the Fund to pay pension obligations in the last pay period.

The Fund's portfolio dipped to its lowest in fiscal year 2008 when it was valued at only around $280 million.

Fund officials said that if not for the continuous drawdowns, the pension program would have been at 60 percent funded level—compared to its current actual status of only 30 percent funded.

In fiscal year 2009, the Fund withdrew a total of $43 million to pay for its pension obligations; in fiscal year 2010, it withdrew about $40 million.

The Fund needs about $860 million for it to be fully funded by 2045.

Forgery case dismissed; suspect already left NMI

Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo dismissed yesterday a six-year-old forgery case after the prosecution recently learned that the suspect has already left the CNMI.

Govendo dismissed the information charging 27-year-old Bin Xin Xu with two counts of forgery.

Chief Prosecutor Michael Ernest asked the court to dismiss the case as records show that Xu, a Chinese national, left the CNMI on Dec. 17, 2005, and has not returned since then.

Xu's bail of $687 was forfeited and applied as restitution to the victim, XH Market or Huang Xui Qin. If Qin could not be located, the judge said the $687 will be forfeited for the CNMI government.

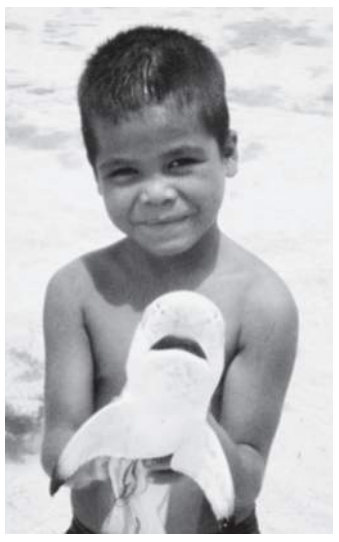
The Office of the Attorney General filed the charges against Xu on June 9, 2005.

According to the OAG, Xu defrauded XH Market in Chalan Kanoa on April 27, 2005, and May 10, 2005, by forging checks payable to the store in the amount of $387 and $300. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Can you identify

THE NMI Council for the Humanities, in collaboration with the *Saipan Tribune*, is running a series of photographs in this section every Tuesday and is inviting the public to identify the persons or places featured in this section.

If you can identify the persons or places in the picture, please contact the NMI Council for the Humanities by telephone (235-4785), via email (photo@nmihumanities.org) or by visiting the Council's office located in Springs Plaza, Gualo Rai. These images are from the Council's Historic Photograph Database which is currently being developed to help document the history and cultures of the CNMI.



The individuals in last week's column were identified, from left, as Frances M. Sablan and Bertha Chong Tudela. Photo taken at the South Pacific Games in 1987. They were identified by Vivian Lizama, Lucy Aldan, Celina Kaipat, Catherine Aguon, Zenaida Santos, Arlene Ngiraked, Wolf Mojica, Marg Reyes, Gloria Reyes, John O. Taitano, Tona Fitial, Jocelyn Kapileo, Esther Manglona, Liana Hofschneider, Chong Torres, Doris Chong, Gary Villagomez, Joaquina Chong, Jeffery Castro, Frances M. Sablan, Annale' S. Torres, and Doll Tydingco.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

DEQ sets islandwide cleanup

The Division of Environmental Quality Monthly Cleanup Brigade is deviating again from its regular first Saturday of each month and has scheduled an islandwide cleanup in celebration of the 2011 Environmental Awareness Month.

If you would like to volunteer your time to clean and beautify the island, register and be a part of the 2011 islandwide cleanup scheduled for Friday, April 15, from 2pm to 4:30pm or Saturday, April 16, 2011, from 8am to 10am or until the route is finished or too tired to move on. Volunteers will split into groups and clean north, south east and west.

For more information about volunteering, contact the DEQ office at 664-8500/1. ***(DEQ)***

Call for volunteers for MMAC golf tournament

Volunteers are needed to help pass out water for golfers and spot holes at the upcoming Marianas March Against Cancer Golf Tournament, hosted by Team TSA at the Laolao Bay Golf Resort this Saturday, April 2, 2011, starting at 6am (registration for the tournament begins at 6:30am). Interested volunteers are asked to come to a short orientation the day before the tournament, on Friday, April 1, at Laulau Bay Golf Resort at 4pm. For more information, contact Sia or Betty at 285-4070/1 or the Commonwealth Cancer Association at 682-0050 or email cca@ccamarianas.org.

The main MMAC event is slated for May 13-14, 2011 at Hopwood Junior High School. For more information about the Marianas March Against Cancer, contact 2011 MMAC chair Dave Guerrero at dave.b.guerrero@gmail.com. ***(PR)***

John Gonzales LIVE this week

John Gonzales LIVE airs Wednesday and rebroadcasts on Sunday and Monday all from 7pm to 8pm on KSPN Ch. 2. LIVE on 3/30/11 and rebroadcasts on 4/3 and 4/4, 2011.

John Gonzales LIVE also rebroadcasts worldwide on Betelnut Radio (www.betelnutradio.com) on March 30, 2011, at 6pm Pacific Standard Time and 9pm Eastern Standard Time (March 31, 2011, at 12pm Chamorro Standard Time in the CNMI and Guam).

Viewers can participate by calling (287-4230), texting (285-META) (6382), OR emailing (johngonzales@pticom.com).

TOPICS: Brownfields Program; Safe Drinking Water Program; Environmental Awareness Month Activities. ***(PR)***

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Mar. 29, 1999

CNMI urged: Lengthen lease period to 99 years

The Northern Marianas may have to consider extending the land lease terms from the current 55-year limitation to 75 or 99 years to lure huge investments on the island. While the present land lease agreement has not deterred investors from Japan and Korea, it has impeded the development of Chinese and U.S. businesses, said David Burger, director of Burger & Comer, a full-service accounting firm. Burger cited the Outrigger hotels which have expanded in Hawaii, Majuro, Belau and soon on Guam but has not considered Saipan. When he met with one of the company's development staff in 1991, Burger said the 55 year land lease has prevented Outrigger from investing in the CNMI.

Senator slings back at ex-governor over 'anti-business' slant

Senate Floor leader Pete P. Reyes defended the Legislature from criticisms by former governor Froilan C. Tenorio over passage of bills viewed as deterrent to doing business in the CNMI, saying lawmakers are trying to correct misdeeds during the previous administration. While he praised Tenorio for his outspokenness, Reyes said some measures implemented by the former governor resulted in actions that the present administration has been trying to restore to their original status. "Most of the things that we have passed are responses to most of the screw up he had done," the senator said in an interview.

Mar. 29, 2001

OVR plugs self-employment for persons with disabilities

Recognizing the need to promote self-employment to improve the working ability of individuals with disabilities, the Office of the Vocational Rehabilitation yesterday held a workshop for service providers. With over 30 participants from various government and private agencies, the concerted efforts of advocating agencies tackled various issues that include entrepreneurial opportunities for persons with disabilities. OVR Director Felicitas Abraham invited facilitator Dave Hammis of University of Montana. Under the Griffin-Hammis Associates, the presenter works to create communities of economic cooperation to improve community capacity and economic well-being of individuals with disabilities.

SGMA asks road courtesy for garment factory workers

SGMA Chairman Gonzalo Q. Santos reacted to the latest pedestrian fatality on March 25, where three Chinese workers from Mirage Saipan, Inc. were struck by a speeding vehicle in upper Garapan, by calling on all that are involved for more information. With SGMA Board concurrence at a meeting held March 28, Santos has instructed to have all factories mandated to receive pedestrian safety training courses from the CNMI Department of Public Safety. Santos stated, "This has been voluntary up until now. In our recently concluded SGMA/OSHA Safety Conference, we invited DPS to bring to our Members what they could offer us in training for pedestrian safety. DPS is willing to help us keep our workers educated. But, with this recent tragedy, it is no longer optional."

Mar. 29, 2002

PSS joins Coral Reef Initiative

Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente and acting administrator Joaquin D. Salas of Coastal Resources Management presented the Public School System with instructional material highlighting the coral reefs of Northern Marianas. The Coral Reef Flash Cards are specific to local reefs and are part of CRM's ongoing effort to increase community awareness of the importance of coral reefs and other coastal resources. The card graphics were selected for their local relevance in order to interest students, according to CRM. The material will be introduced this year as a pilot project in classrooms in the CNMI.

Queen's bills NMI for $1.8M debt

Based on a recent communication from the Queen's Medical Center in Honolulu, Hawaii, the government's unpaid medical claims at the hospital now stands at $1.8 million. Rep. Benjamin B. Seman, who is chairman of the House Committee on Health and Welfare, said the hospital recently wrote him a letter highlighting this concern, with an offer to give the CNMI a 25-percent discount if it helps in settle the amount. Seman quickly added, though, that this $1.8 million is a figure coming from the hospital and may not necessarily be accurate or reliable.

DYS reaches out to parents on proper parenting

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

About 70 parents joined a development workshop held at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium Saturday morning to learn about health issues such as maternal and early childhood, as well as diabetes prevention and control, among others.

The workshop, hosted by the Division of Youth Services, focused on the theme "Taking Parent Leadership to New Heights: Real Families, Real Involvement and Real Outcomes."

Jaclyn T. Mendiola, Division of Youth Services acting director, said it is the agency's aim to provide parents with knowledge and information about programs that would help with the success of their families.

Among the presenters in Saturday's event were Luis I. Camacho, a DYS parent leader, who encouraged his peers to work and act together to ensure the success of their children.

For two years in a row now, Camacho has been selected as a DYS parent nominee for his efforts to bring parenting to a new level.

With emerging technologies, Camacho believes that many are losing their grasp of what parenting means and what it entails.

"With modern technology such as computers and [cell phones], we pretty much lost the grasp of parenting and I believe it should not be this way. …Parents need to reach out and get together to discuss the situation. My goal is to bring parents and DYS together for a common goal," he told *Saipan Tribune.*

Camacho said that many parents in the community are "afraid" of DYS because of a wrong impression about the agency's responsibility.

"This is why, I for one, believe that DYS should go out to our community and assist whatever they can to help our families. The problem here is: a lot of community members are so afraid of DYS, but it's not DYS who is bad…it's our own family structure that creates the problem," he explained.

Camacho cited DYS programs that could help parents: Parent Anonymous, Commonsense Parenting, and Parent Leadership.

Although the division caters mainly to youths, Mendiola said they deal with the whole family unit as well.

"It's very important that we treat them as a unit because our youths are still under the guidance of their parents. We offer programs that address family dynamics. The more outreach we have, the more advocacy we have for our youth and families…and the more progress we see among families in the community," said Mendiola.

Community and Cultural Affairs Secretary Melvin Faisao said that Saturday's workshop aims to increase parental involvement and strengthen family ties. In his welcome remarks to participants, he shared the department's data on how programs such as parent leadership help youths in the community to succeed.

He recognized the contribution of partner agencies that also provided informational materials to participants at the workshop.

NEW CHRISTIAN

Congratulations to Joey Claude Borja Mostales on your baptism, held Saturday, March 26, 2011! God bless and we love you! Love, Daddy, Mommy, Joshua, and Naomi.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

Belated happy birthday to Tahlia Hideo, who is celebrating her birthday today! We love you Tahlia! Greetings come from your best friends Anthony Iglecias, Debu Sablan, and Tinon Ramangmou.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Pesticide applicator certification exam at DEQ

Certification is required for all pesticide applicators and persons intending to use, sell, or distribute restricted use pesticides on a property owned by him/her or for hire.

■ You are required to get your pesticide applicator certification if:

■ You use insect or pest control products on plants, vegetables, fruits, or flowers;

■ Apply a weed-and-feed product to a client's lawn or spray for insects;

■ Use insect or pest control products for the maintenance of resort grounds, golf courses, or greenhouses;

■ Apply pesticides to someone else's property;

■ Provide information or consultation about commercial pesticide use;

■ Apply, purchase, or distribute Restricted Use Pesticides; or

■ Apply pesticides in residences, schools or public places.

Examinations administered by DEQ are held on the second Monday of each month at 9am at the DEQ conference room. Examinations are limited to seven persons per month. The dates for the next three months are as follows: April 11, May 9, and June 13, 2011.

Candidates must register at least three working days prior to the scheduled examination date. Each exam is a written, closed-book examination consisting of ninety multiple choice questions. Each candidate has up to two hours to complete the exam. The minimum passing score is 70 percent. Results shall be only provided to the candidate in writing by mail within 10 business days.

All certificates are valid for a period of three years. Pesticide applicators who want to renew their certification must successfully complete the examination and submit a completed application form for certification.

For more information, visit the Pesticide and Storage Tank webpage at www.deq.gov.mp or call Reina Camacho, Pesticide and Storage Tank branch manager at 664-8500/12. ***(DEQ)***

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

INVITATION FOR BID

(This ad is paid for by NMHC with HUD funds.)

BID SUBMISSION DATE: APRIL 26, 2011 • TIME: 10:00 AM

NMHC IFB 2011-R-001

"CONSTRUCTION OF THE SAIPAN LEADERSIP MEMORIAL KIOS KU PROJECT, PHASE III"

Proposal packets will be available on March 29, 2011, at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, during regular working hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Monday thru Friday except CNMI holidays. A non-refundable payment of Two Hundred Fifty Dollars ($250.00) is required for each set. Payment shall be by money order or cashier's check (payable to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation).

A mandatory pre-bid conference will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, April 8, 2011, at the proposed project site in Chalan Kanoa, Saipan, across the U.S. Post Office.

This project is funded by a grant from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), under its Community Development Block Grant, American Recovery and Reinvestment (CDBG-R) funding provided to the Commonwealth that mandates ALL MATERIALS PURCHASED AND INCORPORATED INTO THE BUILDING/WORK MUST BE MANUFACTURED OR PRODUCED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

/s/ Marcie M. Tomokane
Board Chairwoman & Contracting Officer

/s/ Herman S. Sablan, Director
Division of Procurement & Supply

Commonwealth Cancer Association
AWARENESS•EDUCATION•HOPE

Request for Administrative Services

The Commonwealth Cancer Association (CCA) is seeking a Project Assistant to provide **administrative and office support services** for the Board and Project Coordinator to develop and implement a breast and cervical cancer outreach project. The hours are flexible; some weekend and evening work will be required, however.

The Project Assistant must have a valid 2011 CNMI business license and must be ready to begin in April 2011 and work through September 2011.

Compensation is approximately $9-12 per hour, commensurate with experience. Approximately 15-20 hours per week will be required; actual hours per week are variable. In addition, the contractor will be reimbursed for mileage.

For a complete description of the qualifications required and the duties to be performed, call CCA at (670) 682-0050 or email cca@ccamarianas.org.

To apply, submit a cover letter and resume on or before 5pm on Monday, April 4, 2011 to cca@ccamarianas.org or hand-deliver to the CCA office on the first floor of the Nokalimi Plaza in Garapan.

Paid for by funding from CDC Reach U.S. Program

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

AMENDED NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY
of
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT FUNDS
for
PROGRAM YEAR 2011
and
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

This advertisement is paid for by NMHC with CPD Funds.

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, through the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) is announcing the availability of $1,591,011.00 in Community Planning and Development (CPD) funds available from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. NMHC anticipates receiving $880,151.00 in Community Development Block Grants (CDBG); $647,474 Home Investment Partnership (HOME); and, $63,386.00 Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) funds for Program Year (PY) 2011.

The CDBG funds, authorized under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, may be used for a wide range of community development activities to revitalize neighborhoods, provide affordable housing, expand economic opportunities, and improve community facilities and services. However, use of these funds must meet at least one of the national objectives which include: 1) to benefit low and moderate-income families; 2) to eliminate slum or blight conditions; or 3) to meet other urgent community development needs.

The CDBG program requires a grant recipient to certify that it will minimize displacement of persons as a result of activities assisted with CDBG funds. The CNMI government does not plan on undertaking any activity which will cause displacement of persons. In the event of any unforeseen displacement resulting from any CDBG funded activity, the CNMI government will comply with the requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, its implementing regulation and applicable local law.

HOME funds may be used to create affordable housing through financing assistance, site acquisition or improvement, and rehabilitating existing residential dwellings as well as providing funds for new construction or purchase of a single-family residential dwelling. Use of HOME funds must benefit low-income families.

ESG funds may be used to rehabilitate or convert buildings into homeless shelters and for shelter operating expenses, supportive services and homeless prevention activities. Use of ESG funds must benefit the homeless.

Information concerning eligibility uses of the grant funds may be obtained upon request at the respective offices of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) located on Garapan, Saipan; San Jose, Village, Tinian; and, Songsong Village, Rota.

In order to plan ahead as to the use(s) of the PY 2011 allocation, the NMHC will be conducting hearings to obtain public input on community development and housing needs, and to provide information to the public on the status of the approved ongoing CDBG projects. The public hearings will be held as follows:

1. On Rota, April 18, 2011, at 6:30 p.m. at the NMHC Office, Songsong Village;
2. On Tinian, April 19, 2011, at 6:30 p.m. at the CDA/NMHC Office in San Jose Village; and,
3. On Saipan, April 20, 2011, at 6:30 p.m. at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan.

Accommodations for disabled individuals or other non-English speaking individuals who wish to attend the public hearing is available upon request by giving at least 24 hours notice prior to the meeting so that such needs can be arranged and provided. Additional inquiries concerning the CDBG program may be directed in writing to the Corporate Director, Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, P.O. 500514, Saipan, MP. 96950, or by calling Zenie P. Mafnas, Grant Writer/Planner at 234-6866 or 234-7689.

/s/ **Joshua T. Sasamoto**
Corporate Director

"NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer"

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXI, Issue No. 74

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MEMBER
The Associated Press
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EDITORIAL

The one and only Liz

Is there any doubt that Elizabeth Taylor defined "celebrity" for the modern age? With her violet eyes, blockbuster jewelry (which she owned, as opposed to today's stars, who borrow or steal it), tempestuous romances and influential charities, she was someone we could never quite stop watching.

We watched her grow up on screen, from child star to young beauty to Liz, who needed only one name. We were shocked by her eight marriages. We grieved with her over the untimely death of her third husband, Michael Todd, in a plane crash; we scorned her for taking up with Eddie Fisher—her eventual fourth—when he was still married to Debbie Reynolds. We watched agog as she carried on a torrid affair with Richard Burton on the set of "Cleopatra," the lavish film that nearly bankrupted 20th Century Fox.

We were transfixed by Liz and Dick's jet-set hedonism—and not one but two marriages. Years later, when she married future Sen. John Warner of Virginia and transformed herself into a political wife, we wondered whether she was bored out of her mind living inside the Beltway.

We knew she loved the chili at Chasen's—she had it delivered to the "Cleopatra" set in Rome—and watched over the years as she went from voluptuous to fat to slim again. We watched as her hair went from blue-black to a stunning silver, which she flaunted. We watched as she suffered illnesses and mishaps, reading with curiosity and concern the reports about her failing health, her difficulty walking. She seemed to always recover—until her death Wednesday from congestive heart failure.

The public twists and turns of her life seemed a test of social mores, and little of it appeared prosaic, even when she was trying to be ordinary in Washington. In the last few decades she came to embody the best use of Hollywood clout, as one of the earliest supporters of AIDS causes (and the founding international chair of the American Foundation for AIDS Research) at a time when its sufferers were practically considered lepers. And so we watched nonstop. As of Wednesday, her Twitter account had 331,542 followers.

Taylor stopped making movies so long ago that you'd be hard pressed to remember the last time you saw her onscreen in a theater. (Could it have been as Wilma's mother in the 1994 live-action "The Flintstones"?) But it's unlikely that many people who heard the news of her death uttered that sad remark often heard when old Hollywood stars die: "Oh, I thought she was already dead."

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Protests against wars, funding cuts die down

By LEWIS W. DIUGUID
The Kansas City Star

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George W. Bush may have had it right after all when he dismissed protests against the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq as a "focus group's" futile efforts.

It has been eight years this week since the United States began the costly and bloody war in Iraq chasing after mythical weapons of mass destruction. Concocted lies scared the public into believing now-dead dictator Saddam Hussein was prepared to use the WMDs against us. Nearly 10 years has passed since U.S. troops invaded Afghanistan in a still unsuccessful attempt to end terrorism, eliminate the Taliban and capture Osama bin Laden.

The wars continue, but protests have mostly subsided except for the grim start-of-war anniversaries such as now or the Sept. 11, 2001, tragedy. The public outcry has ended despite the majority of Americans turning against keeping U.S. troops fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The conflict has lessened for U.S. troops in Iraq with President Barack Obama's withdrawal of combat troops. But Iraqi civilians still die at an alarming rate as the instability Bush created continues.

In Afghanistan fighting is ongoing with an increase in the number of U.S. combat troops and military drones flying bombing raids that also sweep into Pakistan. Civilian casualties keep mounting, too.

Maintaining passion and drive in protests is tough. People have jobs, families and obligations that don't include standing by curbsides in large numbers trying to fire up an apathetic public.

As numbers have dwindled, those left staffing protest outposts seem like crackpots. They are looked upon as if they resemble the infamous Japanese soldiers on deserted islands who kept fighting after World War II had ended because they never got word that Japan had surrendered.

It's not just antiwar protesters who are running out of steam trying to get the public's attention. Union leaders in Wisconsin and Ohio are finding it difficult to maintain large numbers of people to protest state funding cuts and attacks on collective bargaining.

Initially in Wisconsin, tens of thousands of people protested Gov. Scott Walker's efforts to eliminate most collective bargaining rights for teachers, firefighters and other public workers. By the time Republicans took an end-run action without absent Democrats, only a few students were protesting.

In Ohio, Gov. John Kasich has pushed for passage of a bill allowing unionized public workers to negotiate wages, hours and certain work conditions but not health care or pension benefits. The proposal would do away with automatic raises.

Like the war protesters, the workers have jobs they have to maintain. America isn't Egypt, Bahrain, Yemen or Libya. There is neither the wildly angry protest by people against their rulers nor has the military been alerted to squelch the free speech action.

World outrage over the protests and some deadly government responses in the Middle East and Africa helped fuel some changes. Protesters have stayed connected to the latest news through social media. It has provided them with information and strategies that the government-run and corporate media wouldn't touch.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton this month even praised Al-Jazeera, saying it offered more "real news" even to people in the United States than some of America's news outlets. Al-Jazeera has helped keep interest high in the protests, adding to the social media plume.

In the early years of the war effort, news media quoted government officials telling people to go to malls and big box stores and do their patriotic duty by shopping. Or in the case of union protests against states trying to strip collective bargaining rights, people are sold on organized labor being unnecessary, elements of the past and something the nation can't afford in today's bad economy.

The danger in the growing apathy in the public's willingness to exercise free-speech rights in our democracy and even to go to the polls in big numbers is elected officials won't take seriously those who bother to protest or vote. The dissidents are just a "focus group," right?

People will give up and give in. The protests that some may have participated in will be just laughable footnotes, if they appear at all in U.S. history books.

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Learning lessons in Libya

By JAMES JAY CARAFANO and JAMES PHILLIPS
THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION

What next in Libya? President Obama has yet to outline a clear and certain course. The best option would be to minimize the commitment of the U.S. military, look after the best interests of Libya's civilian population, and limit the spread of terrorism and instability throughout the region. The question is how.

First, the president must clearly articulate the mission of U.S. operations in Libya and clarify U.S. interests. A clear declaration of purpose is vital to avoid "mission creep"—an expansion of commitments beyond the original goal of the operation. The United States does have legitimate interests in the outcome: bringing Moammar Gadhafi to justice, ensuring the country doesn't become a terrorist haven, preventing a humanitarian crisis and a wave of refugees that could overwhelm our European allies, stopping the spread of civil war to bordering nations.

But these concerns fall short of vital interests that would justify significant, protracted operations by U.S. forces and can be addressed through measures short of war. Even at this point, it's difficult to endorse further military operations without a clear understanding of their scope and purpose.

In any military operation, initial plans never survive first contact with the enemy. This was seen hours after the vote in the U.N. Security Council resolution when Gadhafi tried to forestall military action by unilaterally declaring a cease-fire. Military planners should lay out "branches" (alternative plans if the initial ones fail) and "sequels" (follow-on plans to exploit success). For example, what would the United States do if Gadhafi's regime collapses? What would the United States do if Gadhafi launches terrorist attacks against the United States or its allies? Congress and the White House should seek common ground now—not after the president announces the next troop deployments—on what is prudent.

The United States should no longer recognize the government in Libya. Limiting the capacity of Gadhafi's military was always well within the capabilities of coalition forces backed by the United States. The question has always been: What comes next? If the United States and other interested nations wish to avoid protracted military engagement, they must position for success by identifying and supporting a "legitimate" opposition that is free from terrorist taint.

It's too soon to determine whether the opposition should be backed with sufficient resources and support to storm Tripoli—a rush to Tripoli by a disorganized and ill-prepared military force might only serve to exchange the threat of a humanitarian crisis in Benghazi for one in the capital—or be given adequate support to defend itself. Neither of these options would be cheap or risk free, but they are more manageable than protracted U.S. engagement.

Likewise, supporting the opposition would include expanding its capacity to govern, provide goods and services, and restore the Libyan economy.

In this manner, as the rebels expand their authority in the country, they will be able to do so in a manner that looks after the civilian population—a better solution than enforcing an immediate regime change, which might result in chaos and put the whole population at risk.

Supporting the opposition may require circumnavigating the prohibition against arming them in U.N. Security Council resolutions (Resolution 1970 prohibited the supply of arms to anyone in Libya; Resolution 1973 is ambiguous).

Meanwhile, the United States should continue to work to isolate Gadhafi's regime in every way possible with the goal of one day bringing him to justice. Libya's neighbors have the most to lose if Gadhafi remains in power, or if parts of Libya becoming a terrorist safe haven and training ground. They should bear the majority of the cost and responsibility for support going forward.

Britain and France will—it is hoped—assume responsibility for the bulk of air support duties, backed by Denmark, Norway, Spain and as many Arab countries as possible. Wealthy members of the Gulf Cooperation Council—the first international body to call for military action in Libya—should help finance the operation, if not send their own warplanes to enforce it.

If Gadhafi remains in power, he will undoubtedly seek revenge against his enemies. He may seek to reacquire weapons of mass destruction technologies. Likewise, al-Qaida could, as it has sought to do elsewhere, seek to use the country as a battleground to recruit and train terrorists.

The United States must be prepared to deal with terrorists trying to smuggle foreign fighters into Libya or arms and support to Gadhafi. There is no magic button for solving the problems of Libya. No option is risk-free. The Obama administration and Congress, however, should adopt the most prudent course. Protecting U.S. interests and playing a positive role in the region will require limited but long-term engagement.

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Latin America scores high on 'happiness' index

By MARIFELI PEREZ-STABLE
The Miami Herald

Marifeli Perez-Stable (www.marifeliperez-stable.com) is senior non-resident fellow at the Inter-American Dialogue in Washington, a professor at Florida International University and a columnist for the Miami Herald.

Life satisfaction—commonly known as happiness—is what it's all about. What makes us happy is another matter altogether. The adage that money can't buy happiness, it turns out, is mostly wrong.

If by money we mean luxury cars, McMansions and exquisite jewelry, then there might be some truth to it. If, on the other hand, we mean individual and national well-being, money does buy us happiness.

In The Economics of Happiness in the Americas, Margarita Corral—a doctoral candidate at Vanderbilt University—draws a portrait of subjective well-being in our hemisphere based on the 2010 Americas Barometer survey (AmericasBarometer.org).

Except for Haiti, majorities in the 26 countries surveyed see themselves leading satisfying lives. The top five are Brazil (71.6 percent), Costa Rica (67.7 percent), Venezuela (65.6 percent), Panama (65.1 percent) with Trinidad & Tobago and Honduras tied at 63.3 percent. Haiti aside, the next five from the bottom are Jamaica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Belize and Peru, though all are above 50 percent.

Recent studies have upended a paradox of earlier research: income matters only for individual satisfaction and does not necessarily increase in wealthier countries. Happiness is a relative state of mind. If we see ourselves less well-off than those immediately around us, we tend to feel less satisfied with our lives. Conversely, people in poorer countries may feel satisfied if their living conditions are better than their neighbors.

Corral argues that economic factors are important at both the individual and national levels. How we perceive our personal material situation, household wealth and the national economy are strong predictors of happiness. Other factors such as marital status and whether or not an individual has children, church attendance, age, interpersonal trust and political (the right-left continuum) identity also count. So do gender, education and size of town.

The Americas Barometer data confirm that economic factors—income and perceptions of the individual and national situations—bear a positive correlation with levels of life satisfaction. For the region as a whole, perception of our individual economic conditions is by far the strongest predictor of individual happiness. Perception of the national economy is also important but not as strongly. Corral highlights what social scientists should always keep in the forefront: subjective experience matters.

Thus, it isn't at all surprising that Brazil leads the Americas on the happiness index. After having been "the country of the future and always will be," Brazil is now the world's seventh largest economy, has markedly reduced poverty and expanded the middle class, all thanks to market-oriented reforms and smart, progressive social policies. To boot, Brazil will host the Soccer World Cup (2014) and the Summer Olympics (2016).

In contrast to other contexts, marriage has a positive but not significant effect on life satisfaction among the region's citizens. Church goers and those who are surrounded by people they trust also register high levels of satisfaction. Women, the elderly, young adults, the better educated and those who live in large cities likewise express high levels of happiness. Yet, having children and being unemployed weigh negatively on individual satisfaction.

As in other studies, Americas Barometer finds that citizens with conservative views tend to be happier than their counterparts on the left.

Conservatives in the region have more reasons to be happy today than three decades ago when state-centered economic policies had wreaked havoc. Most have also learned to be democrats, winning elections at first, then succumbing to the voters later, now hoping to win the next round.

Latin Americans on the left, however, are facing societies that still require many years of good economic performance and sound social policies to make significant, lasting dents on poverty and inequality.

President Obama has just returned from visits to Brazil, Chile and El Salvador. In general, Latin Americans view the United States favorably. Understandably perhaps, Obama hasn't paid much attention to the region. Unlike earlier times, Latin America is mostly on the right track. American administrations have been better at paying attention when things go wrong.

The United States registered toward the bottom of the life-satisfaction index. At 58.7 percent, we fall between Guyana and Bolivia. That's not a good place to be.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

No to power poles in Marpi

I am writing to protest the placement of power poles out in Marpi between the temple and the new cemetery.

1. I understand that federal money covers the cost of this project but it will be local money paying the power bills, money the local government does not have. I believe this is a misuse of federal funds as the cemetery does NOT need power.

2. A generator could be used for a pump for the bathrooms but there is no need for lighting or irrigation. We get plenty of rain! The veterans' cemetery has gotten along just fine with only a generator. Banzai has bathrooms but no power!

3. Each time a project is allowed in Marpi the demise of our major tourist attraction is continued. This is just another example of the continuing encroachment on the beauty of one of Saipan's major natural attractions.

Suzy Kindel
Sadog Tasi, Saipan

Open letter to CUC

Why are the base rates for all customers not the same, regardless of the amount of usage? Why are residential users charged different rates depending upon their amount of usage?

It appears to me that residences with large families are penalized because they necessarily use more electricity as a whole—even though they may actually be using significantly less per person than a single occupant residence.

Why are residential users who use more than 2,000 kWh charged significantly more than commercial and government users also using more than 2,000 kWh?

Does the failure of the government to pay for their use of electricity affect the rate that others must pay? In other words, is the rate charged to residential users increased in order to cover the failure of the government to pay the cost of the electricity it uses? How are prepaid customers charged? Do prepaid customers pay both the base rate and additional LEAC charge?

What is the cost of putting in an additional meter?

Jeanne H. Rayphand
San Vicente, Saipan

Water in Chinatown

I congratulate the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. for its around-the-clock running water to 26 villages. But what about Chinatown? CUC opens the water at 8:30am or 9am daily. I feel terrible for the schoolchildren and workers who probably go to work without taking a shower. I suggest that CUC open the water at 6am. I am assuming that not many Chinatown residents have water tanks as auxiliary water to CUC water.

One more thing: It is really painful on the pocket of a single person to pay $40 flat rate for water. On Navy Hill, can't residents have their water meters installed by the roadside and be charged for the actual use of water, instead of a flat rate $40 for unmetered water? Is CUC trying to make money out of the poor residents of Navy Hill by ignoring the water meter project and going ahead with the flat rate $40? Whose fault is it if the residents don't have water meters: the CPUC or the regular CUC staff?

Teddy Guiao
Navy Hill, Saipan

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲85° ▼75°	▲87° ▼75°	▲87° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°

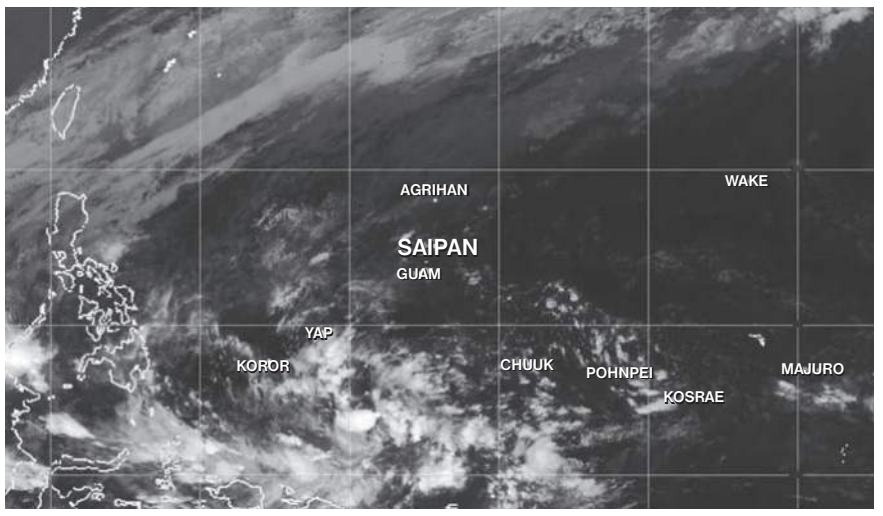
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Thundershowers	▲86	▼78
Palau	Showers	▲86	▼78
Yap	Showers	▲86	▼78
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲83	▼76
Pohnpei	Rain	▲84	▼77
Kosrae	Showers	▲87	▼78
Majuro	Showers	▲86	▼76

Around The Globe

Auckland	Cloudy	▲68	▼60
Beijing	Sunny	▲69	▼37
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	▲68	▼60
Honolulu	Sunny	▲82	▼72
London	Showers	▲54	▼43
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲70	▼51
Manila	Thundershowers	▲84	▼75
Melbourne	Sunny	▲75	▼54
Miami	Thundershowers	▲84	▼70
New York	Mostly Sunny	▲49	▼34
Osaka	Showers	▲57	▼40
Paris	Partly Cloudy	▲60	▼44
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	▲53	▼42
Rome	Showers	▲63	▼48
Salem	Showers	▲53	▼43
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	▲60	▼52
Seoul	Sunny	▲53	▼33
Tokyo	Sunny	▲58	▼39
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	▲55	▼39

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, MONDAY, MARCH 28, 2011
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front extends southwestward from 25N156E to 19N140E then continues as a shear line to beyond 130E at 15N. Clouds and patchy rain are found along and northwest of this boundary. A surface trough just east of the Marianas extends northward from 8N148E to 18N149E. Scattered showers are found near Guam and Saipan between 12N and 16N from 144E to 150E. A near-equatorial trough extends east-southeastward from south of Mindanao through 3N130E and a circulation centered near 3N140E to end near 2N148E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are occurring south of Koror and Yap south of a line from 6N130E to 6N137E to 9N141E to 9N144E to 4N154E. An upper-level low is centered near Pohnpei at 7N158E. Upper-level divergence near this feature is coupling with trade-wind convergence to produce widely-scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms just north of Pohnpei and Kosrae and near Chuuk between 5N and 9N from 151E to 164E. Scattered showers are also found southeast of Majuro east of 173E between 2N and 7N.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

5:15 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.7 Feet
10:52 AM	Today	Low Tide:	1.0 Feet
3:45 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.5 Feet
10:53 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:15 AM	6:29 PM
Wednesday	6:15 AM	6:29 PM
Thursday	6:14 AM	6:29 PM
Friday	6:13 AM	6:29 PM
Saturday	6:12 AM	6:29 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	2:31 AM	2:16 PM
Wednesday	3:11 AM	3:05 PM
Thursday	3:48 AM	3:52 PM
Friday	4:24 AM	4:39 PM
Saturday	4:59 AM	5:25 PM

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 16, 2010

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM

C09317	4:25am	5:15am	Daily
C09313	7:55am	8:45am	3, 6
C09313	8:30am	9:20am	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C09601	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C09603	3:05pm	3:55pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C09605	6:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
C09599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL287	6:10am	8:45am	Daily
DL285	6:40am	9:15am	1, 3, ,4, 5, 6
DL297	4:35pm	7:15pm	Daily

SAIPAN-OSAKA (KIX)

OZ119	4:00am	6:40am	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:20am	6:50am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ606	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ606	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ604	3:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7
OZ119	4:00am	11:25am	Daily via KIX

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

FM844	2:50am	5:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

CA988	3:15am	6:55am	1, 5 Dec 13, 17, 20, 24 & 27 only

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ606/701	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ606/701	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
C09317/891	4:25am	9:45am	3, 6 via GUM
DL285/173	6:40am	10:15pm	1, 3, 4, 5, 6 via NRT
C09313/933	7:55am	9:25pm	3 via GUM
C09313/893	7:55am	11:00pm	3 via GUM-Palau
C09603/933	3:05pm	9:25pm	5 via GUM
C09603/893	3:05pm	11:00pm	5 via GUM-Palau
OZ604/703	3:20pm	11:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7 ICN
OZ604/715	3:20pm	11:30pm	7
C09605/933	6:20pm	9:40pm	1, 2, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
C09599/PR111	9:30pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG

OZ606/721	2:10am	12:00pm	1 via ICN
OZ606/721	2:40am	12:00pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
C09603/909	3:05pm	10:25pm	1, 5 via GUM
OZ604/723	3:20pm	10:35pm	2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ604/749	3:20pm	11:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN

ARRIVALS

GUAM-SAIPAN

C09316	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
C09596	6:35am	7:25am	3, 6
C09596	7:00am	7:50am	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C09600	10:05am	10:55am	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C09602	1:40pm	2:30pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C09604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
C09606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:25am	3:05pm	Daily
DL286	7:45pm	12:20am+1	2, 3, ,4 ,5, 7
DL288	8:00pm	12:30am+1	Daily

OSAKA (KIX)-SAIPAN

OZ120	9:50am	2:20am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:10pm	2:20am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ603	9:00am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7
OZ120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	Daily via KIX
OZ605	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ605	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

FM843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1, 5

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

CA987	6:40pm	1:55am+1	4, 7 Dec 12, 16, 19, 23 & 26 only

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ704/603	12:10am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ716/603	12:30am	2:20pm	4, 6 via ICN
DL172/286	8:05am	12:20am+1	2, 3, 4, 5, 7
C0890/9606	10:55am	8:50pm	3, 6 via GUM
OZ702/605	1:10pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/605	1:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/C09596	10:15pm	7:25am+1	6 via GUM
PR110/C09596	10:15pm	7:50am+1	1, 2, 4, 7 via GUM
C0892/9596	10:25pm	7:25am+1	3 via GUM-Palau
C0892/9596	10:25pm	7:50am+1	5 via GUM-Palau
C0934/9596	11:10pm	7:50am+1	1, 2, 7 via GUM
C0934/9596	11:25pm	7:50am+1	4 via GUM
C0934/9596	11:59pm	7:25am+1	3 via GUM
C0934/9596	11:59pm	7:50am+1	5 via GUM

HONG KONG-SAIPAN

OZ724/603	12:30am	2:20pm	2 ,4 ,6, 7 via ICN
OZ750/603	1:00am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ722/605	1:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/605	1:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
C0910/9596	11:15pm	7:50am+1	1, 5 via GUM

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CZ: China Southern; CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; CA: Air China
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The *Saipan Tribune* is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

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  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam–Rota			
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily
Rota–Saipan			
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily
Guam–Rota			
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily
Rota–Saipan	17:50	18:20	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily
Rota–Guam	10:20	10:45	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily
Rota–Guam			
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily
Saipan–Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40	11:50	Daily
FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily
FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily
FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily
FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily
FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily
FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily
Tinian–Saipan			
FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily
FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily
FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily
FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily
FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily
FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily
FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily
FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily
FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily
FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily
FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily
FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily
FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily

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- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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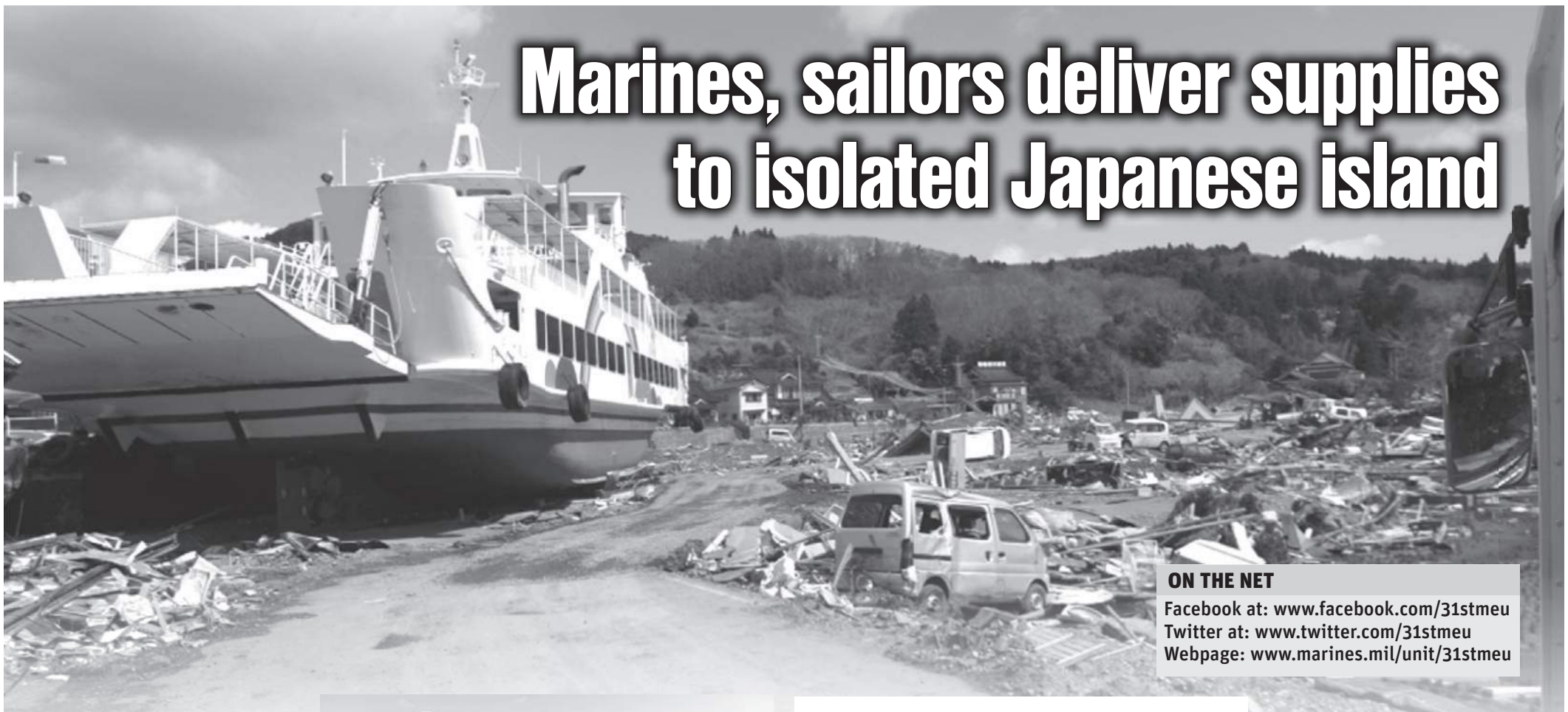
Marines, sailors deliver supplies to isolated Japanese island



ON THE NET
Facebook at: www.facebook.com/31stmeu
Twitter at: www.twitter.com/31stmeu
Webpage: www.marines.mil/unit/31stmeu

OSHIMA, Japan—Two U.S. Navy landing craft carrying Marines and sailors with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit and Amphibious Squadron 11, as well as disaster relief supplies and Japanese electrical utility trucks, arrived in Oshima Island on Sunday, March 27.

Oshima Island has been without running water and electricity since the massive earthquake and subsequent tsunami ravaged the northeast coast of Japan, March 11.

"This island was supplied with water from a pipeline from mainland Japan," said Kiichro Onodera, a local city worker. "After the earthquake, the tsunami destroyed the pump station. Since then, people have purified the water in the city pool and made it drinkable; that's all we had."

The Marines delivered nearly 2,000 gallons of water to the island yesterday. Approximately 900 gallons were brought directly to a junior high school, which was being used as a shelter for 450 locals displaced by the disaster.

"This water will help supply over 3,000 people," Onodera said. "People will now be able to shower, and do things they have not been able to do since the disaster happened."

The Marines also delivered 1,738 meals ready to eat, 136 tarps, and 300 health and comfort kits to the Japan Self Defense Forces to distribute to those in need.

The health and comfort kits contain baby wipes, sunscreen, toilet paper, soap, toothpaste and toothbrushes, shampoo and conditioner, lotion, eye drops, foot powder, razors, lip balm, and tissues.

In addition to delivering humanitarian aid, the Marines and sailors also transported local electrical utility vehicles from Kesennuma city to Oshima Island, to assist with restoring power to the isolated community.

The trucks were brought from the nearby mainland port of Kessenuma by a U.S. Navy landing craft because the bridge to the island was destroyed by the tsunami.

"This will help us to restore vital lifelines to Oshima from Kesennuma as soon as possible. Oshima island residents are suffering greatly," said JSDF Maj. Shinya Takase, operations officer, 1st Division, 41st Infantry Regiment, in charge of disaster response in Kesennuma. "There is no electrical power at all. These vehicles will help them and help ease the situation. Japanese forces and Marines are doing very well in working through this together. At this moment, there is no other option to get these vehicles to Oshima. That is why we are so grateful for your help."

With the landing craft transporting the vehicles, the vital infrastructure needed by the people of the island began to be repaired. By 5pm yesterday, the Marines of the 31st MEU received word that electricity had been restored for the first time in 16 days, due to their efforts in assisting the Japanese workers.

"We are extremely grateful for your cooperation and help," Sasaki Masaetsu, maintenance manager in Kesennuma who rode an LCU to Oshima Island. "We now have a 400 kilowatt emergency generator, two bucket trucks, one crane, and a tools and materials truck, which arrived on your landing craft. We have 450 displaced people here on the island. These trucks will help us provide power for the displaced persons' shelters, and the remaining homes, so they can have heat and light. It is an extreme honor to have the Marines here, we did not expect it, and we are so thankful."

As happy as the Japanese were to receive the supplies, the Marines and sailors of the 31st MEU were just as happy to lend a helping hand.

"To be able to come out here and do this was mind-blowing," said Sgt. Kyle O. Mills, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear assessment and consequence management technician, 31st MEU. "We all saw the destruction on the news, but you just don't know what it's like until you are out here experiencing it firsthand. It was great to be able to do something to help these people."

CBRN Marines were present during the operation as a precautionary measure to monitor radiation levels; ensuring there were no unexpected levels. In the event of any possible contamination, Marines were ready to decontaminate any equipment and personnel exposed.

"We took readings every half-hour to ensure it was safe," said Mills. "For the entire operation the levels remained completely normal."

As the day came to an end, and the Marines returned to the LCU's, everyone who was involved knew they had made a difference.

"We came here to help our Japanese friends and support them in any way possible," said 1st Lt. Robert Jankowski, the engineering platoon commander with Combat Logistics Battalion 31, 31st MEU. "This operation was very successful, we were able to give help and disperse aid to the displaced. All the Marines did a great job."

The 31st MEU's involvement is part of a larger U.S. government response, after a 9.0 earthquake and subsequent tsunami struck Japan causing widespread damage.

The 31st MEU is the only continually forward-deployed MEU, and remains the nation's force-in-readiness in the Asia-Pacific region.

The 31st MEU includes more than 2,200 Marines and sailors and is composed of four elements: the Command Element; Battalion Landing Team 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines; Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 262 (Reinforced) and CLB-31.

The 31st MEU provides a forward-deployed, flexible, sea-based force capable of supporting the ongoing Japanese humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations as directed. ***(PR)***

Business

As Japan shutdowns drag on, auto crisis worsens

TOKYO (AP)—The auto industry disruptions triggered by Japan's earthquake and tsunami are about to get worse.

In the weeks ahead, car buyers will have difficulty finding the model they want in certain colors, thousands of auto plant workers will likely be told to stay home, and companies such as Toyota, Honda and others will lose billions of dollars in revenue. More than two weeks since the natural disaster, inventories of crucial car supplies—from computer chips to paint pigments—are dwindling fast as Japanese factories that make them struggle to restart.

Because parts and supplies are shipped by slow-moving boats, the real drop-off has yet to be felt by factories in the U.S., Europe and Asia. That will come by the middle of April.

"This is the biggest impact ever in the history of the automobile industry," says Koji Endo, managing director at Advanced Research Japan in Tokyo.

Much of Japan's auto industry—the second largest supplier of cars in the world—remains idle. Few plants were seriously damaged by the quake, but with supplies of water and electricity fleeting, no one can say when factories will crank up. Some auto analysts say it could be as late as this summer.

Hitachi Automotive Systems, which makes parts such as airflow sensors and drive control systems, is waiting for its suppliers to restart while dealing with its own problems. Its plants are without water and gas, and have rolling electricity blackouts. Workers are repairing crumpled ceilings, fallen walls and cleaning up shattered glass. A spokesman says he doesn't know when its plants will reopen.

Employee complaint process

HR MATTERS

By FRANK GIBSON
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Frank L. Gibson, SPHR, GPHR, owner of HR Support, CNMI, a Saipan-based training and consulting firm, has been a resident of the CNMI for more than 15 years. One of the founding members of the CNMI Chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management, he has worked both as a line-manager of human resources and in the Human Resource Office.

Comment: In your last article on Responsibility for Employee Safety, I didn't see any suggestion to the employee that they contact the Human Resource Office if they felt working conditions were unsafe. I would have liked to have seen that emphasized and that an employee gave us a chance to solve the problem before going to OSHA.

You are right and that was an unintended omission on my part. I think I was concentrating on the employer's responsibility for employee safety and ignored HR's role. How could I do that! However, your comment leads into a very important topic for any company and its employees—the Complaint Process.

In the training programs that I give and in the other articles I've written, I emphasize that employees should take problems and complaints to their employer, utilizing the company's complaint process. Federal laws, whether an EEO or labor (including OSHA) statute, provide employees with the protected right to bring perceived violations to the appropriate agency's attention. At the same time, the agencies emphasize to employers the need to have a complaint process so that an employee can first bring a problem to the employer's attention in an effort to resolve it in-house. Almost all employee-employer problems can be, and are, dealt with internally.

Let's be honest about it—no one likes to deal with complaints. To an employer, a complaint often means someone thinks they are doing something wrong. To an HR person it's "uh-oh, we've got a problem." But think about it. Would you rather not hear about what you are doing wrong and keep on doing it, or not know what the problem is until something serious happens or, even worse, hear about the mistake or problem from a federal agency.

Of course not—having a good complaint process and good communication with employees, so that they will use the process, provides a means of identifying and resolving problems before they become damaging or expensive to the company. It also gives employees a means to talk about things they feel are wrong, conduct that bothers or offends them, unsafe working conditions, or other things that might be adversely affecting their ability to do their job.

So—back to HR—you have a big role to play. First, you need to make sure that you do have a complaint process that will work and can be easily used. It needs to clearly let employees know who they should go to. It should utilize the chain of command where possible, but make sure that employees know that, where the supervisor or manager is the problem, they can bypass that person and go to HR or another manager, and that they can always come straight to HR if they don't feel they can talk with their manager or supervisor. The process also needs to be easy to use. A verbal complaint to start off with is fine.

HR must facilitate good communication within the company. Train your managers and supervisors on communication skills. Develop an open-door policy if you don't already have one. Encourage managers and supervisors to meet regularly with their employees, both as a group and individually, to both pass down information and to discuss employee questions or problems. HR and senior management should get out of their offices, visit employees in their worksites and let them know their efforts are appreciated. Set up a Beneficial Suggestion program. Put up a Complaint Box. Encourage employees to speak up.

Getting employees to express their problems won't always be easy. Many employees are afraid to speak up with complaints for fear it will cost them their jobs. HR needs to ensure this doesn't happen. In both FLSA and EEO situations, an oral complaint is sufficient to gain protection against retaliation. Employees need to feel comfortable and safe in making a complaint.

And, as they say—the proof of the pudding is in the results. Resolve the complaints whenever possible. Some of course, may not be resolvable to the employee's satisfaction, but at least let employees know that their complaint or problem was listened to and given consideration. Let employees know the resolution or why it couldn't be resolved. Companies that respond to a complaint, investigate it, and don't just sweep it under the rug will stop it from growing into a bigger problem.

If there were an Employee's Bill of Rights, the right to complain should be at the top of the list—and employers should do everything possible to make sure they exercise it.

The information contained in this column is intended as general information only. Readers should obtain professional advice before taking action with respect to their individual situations. Readers may submit questions regarding human resource issues to hrsupportcnmi@gmail.com or editor@saipantribune.com.

Nation

Medicare rise could mean no Social Security COLA

WASHINGTON (AP)—Millions of retired and disabled people in the United States had better brace for another year with no increase in Social Security payments.

The government is projecting a slight cost-of-living adjustment for Social Security benefits next year, the first increase since 2009. But for most beneficiaries, rising Medicare premiums threaten to wipe out any increase in payments, leaving them without a raise for a third straight year.

About 45 million people—one in seven in the country—receive both Medicare and Social Security. By law, beneficiaries have their Medicare Part B premiums, which cover doctor visits, deducted from their Social Security payments each month.

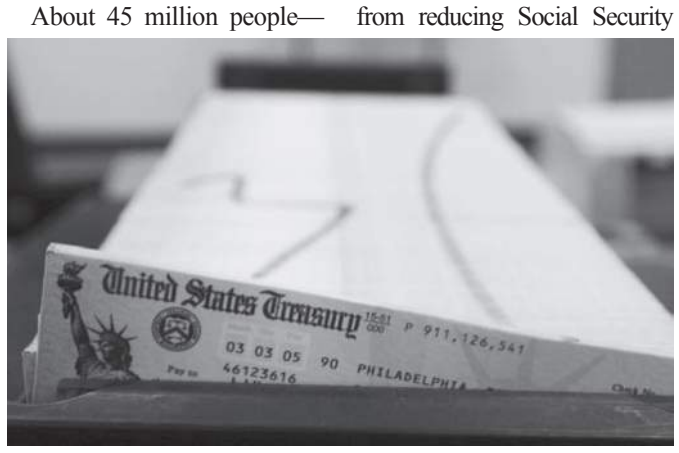
When Medicare premiums rise more than Social Security payments, millions of people living on fixed incomes don't get raises. On the other hand, most don't get pay cuts, either, because a hold-harmless provision prevents higher Part B premiums from reducing Social Security payments for most people.

David Certner of AARP estimates that as many as three-fourths of beneficiaries will have their entire Social Security increase swallowed by rising Medicare premiums next year.

It's a tough development for retirees who lost much of their savings when the stock market collapsed, who lost value in their homes when the housing market crashed and who can't find work because the job market is weak or they are in poor health.

"You just don't have the words to say how much this impacts a person," said Joyce Trebilcock, a retired legal secretary from Belle, Mo., a small town about 100 miles west of St. Louis.

Like most U.S. retirees, Trebilcock, 65, said Social Security is her primary source of income. She said a back injury about 15 years ago left her unable to work, so she applied for disability benefits. Now, she lives on a $1,262 Social Security payment each month, with more than $500 going to pay the mortgage.



AP

This Feb. 2005 file photo shows trays of printed social security checks waiting to be mailed from the U.S. Treasury.

Radiation in Mass. rainwater likely from Japan

BOSTON (AP)—Health officials said Sunday that one sample of Massachusetts rainwater has registered very low concentrations of radiation, most likely from the Japanese nuclear power plant damaged earlier this month by an earthquake and tsunami.

John Auerbach, the Massachusetts commissioner of public health, said that radioiodine-131 found in the sample—one of more than 100 that have been taken around the country—is short lived. He said the drinking water supply in the state was unaffected and officials do not expect any health concerns.

Nevada and other Western states also have reported minuscule amounts of radiation, but scientists say those presented no health risks.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health said the in-state sample was taken in the past week, but they did not say where. The testing is part of a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency network that monitors for radioactivity.

State officials said similar testing was done in California, Pennsylvania, Washington and other states, and showed comparable levels of I-131 in rain.

Massachusetts testing last week of samples from the Quabbin and Wachusett reservoirs showed no detectable levels of I-131, health officials said.

Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Richard K. Sullivan Jr. directed the Department of Environmental Protection to collect additional samples for testing from several water bodies across Massachusetts. Results will be available over the next several days.

ACROSS THE NATION

Family of missing crewmember meet ship in LA

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Family members of a 24-year-old British employee reported missing from a Disney cruise ship last week planned to meet with investigators after the vessel returned to its home port in Los Angeles on Sunday. Rebecca Coriam, whose hometown is Chester, England, was reported missing at sea Tuesday after she failed to report for a scheduled shift on the Disney Wonder. The ship was on a seven-day cruise along the western coast of Mexico. Her mother, Ann Coriam, told KABC-TV that "we just don't know what happened to her, do we? And that's just the worst. We've got to find out what happened." Davies said officials on board told the family that Coriam made a phone call from the ship shortly before being reported missing.

Sailboat capsizes off San Diego; 2 dead, 7 injured

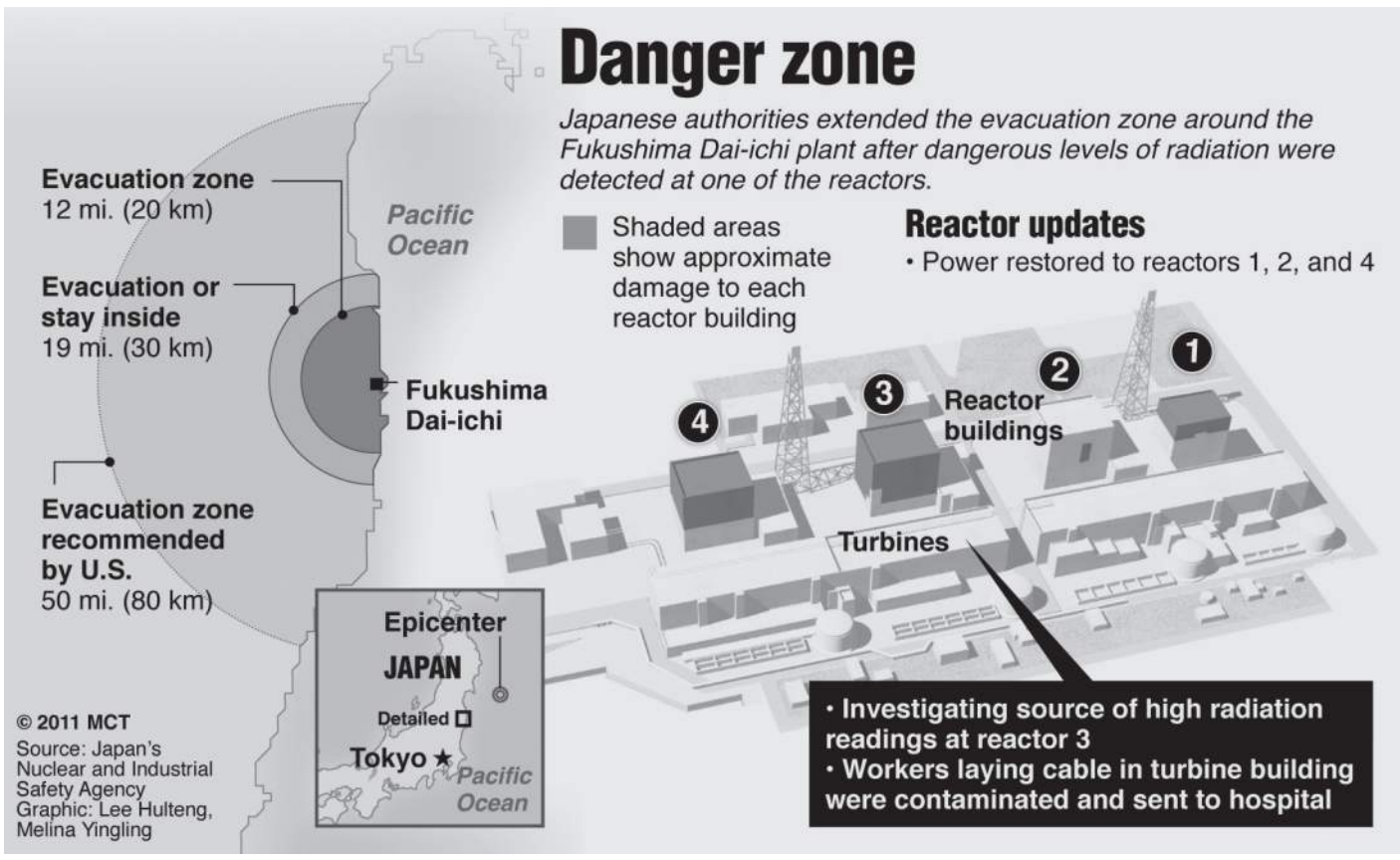
SAN DIEGO (AP)—A sailboat with nine people aboard capsized and sank Sunday in the San Diego Bay, leaving two men drowned and seven people injured, authorities said. The 35-foot boat flipped over for reasons that remained unclear near Shelter Island shortly after 5 p.m., sending all nine people into the water, San Diego Fire-Rescue spokesman Maurice Luque said. Harbor police pulled all nine from the water and took them to a boat dock where some 60 firefighters and paramedics were waiting. Two men in their 50s or 60s were declared dead and the other seven were taken to Scripps Mercy Hospital and University of California, San Diego Medical Center with injuries that were not considered serious.

Crash kills Ala. man, 4 Ind. teens on spring break

ANGOLA, Ind. (AP)—Four northeastern Indiana high school seniors returning from a spring break trip and another man were killed in a three-vehicle crash over the weekend in Alabama. Cpl. Steve Smith with the Alabama State Troopers said the four teens were Matthew Riley Zimmer, Evan Weaver, Matthew Roe and Alexx Bauer. The 18-year-olds were from Angola, Ind., a small community near the Ohio and Michigan state lines. Niall McNellis, 21, of Troy, Ala., also died in the crash about 3 p.m. Saturday.

Asia

Radiation in seawater may be spreading in Japan


Danger zone
Japanese authorities extended the evacuation zone around the Fukushima Dai-ichi plant after dangerous levels of radiation were detected at one of the reactors.
Evacuation zone
12 mi. (20 km)
Evacuation or stay inside
19 mi. (30 km)
Evacuation zone recommended by U.S.
50 mi. (80 km)
Pacific Ocean
Shaded areas show approximate damage to each reactor building
Fukushima Dai-ichi
Reactor updates
• Power restored to reactors 1, 2, and 4
Reactor buildings
Turbines
• Investigating source of high radiation readings at reactor 3
• Workers laying cable in turbine building were contaminated and sent to hospital
Epicenter
JAPAN
Detailed
Tokyo
Pacific Ocean
© 2011 MCT
Source: Japan's Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency
Graphic: Lee Hulteng, Melina Yingling

TOKYO (AP)—Highly radioactive iodine seeping from Japan's damaged nuclear complex may be making its way into seawater farther north of the plant than previously thought, officials said Monday, adding to radiation concerns as the crisis stretches into a third week.

Mounting problems, including badly miscalculated radiation figures and no place to store dangerously contaminated water, have stymied emergency workers struggling to cool down the overheating plant and avert a disaster with global implications.

The coastal Fukushima Dai-ichi power plant, located 140 miles (220 kilometers) northeast of Tokyo, has been leaking radiation since a magnitude-9.0 quake on March 11 triggered a tsunami that engulfed the complex. The wave knocked out power to the system that cools the dangerously hot nuclear fuel rods.

On Monday, workers resumed the laborious yet urgent task of pumping out the hundreds of tons of radioactive water inside several buildings at the six-unit plant. The water must be removed and safely stored before work can continue to power up the plant's cooling system, nuclear safety officials said.

The contaminated water, discovered last Thursday, has been emitting radiation that measured more than 1,000 millisieverts per hour in a recent reading at Unit 2—some 100,000 times normal amounts, plant operator Tokyo Electric Power Co. said.

As officials scrambled to determine the source of the radioactive water, chief Cabinet Secretary Yukio Edano repeated Monday that the contaminated water in Unit 2 appeared to be due to a temporary partial meltdown of the reactor core.

He called it "very unfortunate" but said the spike in radiation appeared limited to the unit.

However, new readings show contamination in the ocean has spread about a mile (1.6 kilometers) farther north of the nuclear site than before. Radioactive iodine-131 was discovered just offshore from Unit 5 and Unit 6 at a level 1,150 times higher than normal, Hidehiko Nishiyama, a spokesman for the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency, told reporters Monday.

He had said earlier there was no link between the radioactive water leaking inside the plant and the radiation in the sea. On Monday, though, he reversed that position, saying he does suspect that radioactive water from the plant may indeed be leaking into the ocean.

Closer to the plant, radioactivity in seawater tested about 1,250 times higher than normal last week and climbed to 1,850 times normal over the weekend. Nishiyama said the increase was a concern, but also said the area is not a source of seafood and that the contamination posed no immediate threat to human health.

Up to 600 people are working inside the plant in shifts. Nuclear safety officials say workers' time inside the crippled units is closely monitored to minimize their exposure to radioactivity, but two workers were hospitalized Thursday when they suffered burns after stepping into contaminated water. They were to be released from the hospital Monday.

Meanwhile, a strong earthquake shook the region and prompted a brief tsunami alert early Monday, adding to the sense of unease across Japan. The quake off the battered Miyagi prefecture coast in the northeast measured magnitude-6.5, the Japan Meteorological Agency said.

No damage or injuries were reported, and TEPCO said the quake would not affect work to stabilize the plant. Scores of strong earthquakes have rattled Japan over the past two weeks.

Confusion at the plant has intensified fears that the nuclear crisis will last weeks, months or years amid alarms over radiation making its way into produce, raw milk and even tap water as far as Tokyo.

On Sunday, TEPCO officials said radiation in leaking water in the Unit 2 reactor was 10 million times above normal—an apparent spike that sent employees fleeing the unit. The day ended with officials saying the huge figure had been miscalculated and offering apologies.

"The number is not credible," TEPCO spokesman Takashi Kurita said late Sunday. "We are very sorry."

A few hours later, TEPCO Vice President Sakae Muto said a new test had found radiation levels 100,000 times above normal—far better than the first results, though still very high.

But he ruled out having an independent monitor oversee the various checks despite the errors.

Muto acknowledged it could take a long time to clean up the Fukushima complex.

"We cannot say at this time how many months or years it will take," he said.

China checks food, water for radiation in 14 areas

BEIJING (AP)—Chinese health authorities say they are monitoring food and drinking water for radiation contamination in 14 provinces and cities in northeastern and coastal areas, after low levels of radioactive material were detected in the northeast.

China has been on high alert for contamination since a nuclear power plant in neighboring Japan started leaking radiation after being damaged in a massive earthquake and tsunami on March 11.

Chinese authorities say low levels of radioactive iodine-131 were detected in the air above China's northeastern Heilongjiang province over the weekend.

The Health Ministry said on its website Monday that the radioactive material in Heilongjiang was "extremely weak" and did not pose a threat to public health.

Indonesian Muslims protest Gadhafi, int'l strikes

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—More than 10,000 Muslims marched Sunday in Indonesia to support pro-democracy and reform movements in Libya, Yemen and Bahrain, calling for the immediate resignation of Libya's leader and protection of civilians. Men, women and children attending the rally in the capital of the world's most populous Muslim nation waved Indonesian flags and shouted "Allah akbar," Arabic for "God is great."

Banners and placards carried by marchers read: "Revolution for freedom," "No to Dictator Ghadafi" or criticized the international air strikes that have checked Libya's military and helped rebels gain control of key towns.

Participants in the rally through downtown Jakarta organized by the Islamic-based Justice and Prosperity Party called for Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi to resign and for civilians to be protected. Justice and Prosperity Party leader Hidayat Nur Wahid told the crowd the Gadhafi dictatorship must be ousted to stop a humanitarian tragedy.

"Ghadafi should accept the reality that people don't want him anymore as their leader," Wahid said. "We demand that the international air strikes over Libya be stopped for the sake of innocent civilians' safety."

The crowd also denounced Israeli air strikes in the Gaza Strip. Islamic Jihad, a militant group that frequently attacks Israel, confirmed two members were killed in a Sunday airstrike there.

Weeks of stepped-up rocket and mortar attacks have fed concerns of another large-scale Israeli military operation against Gaza militants.

The crowd in Jakarta swelled to an estimated 10,000 people and the rally was mostly peaceful, said police officer Riza Rusmawan from the traffic management center. Associated Press reporters at the scene said the crowd size was much higher.

Indonesia's own "people power" revolt toppled long-ruling dictator and Washington ally Gen. Suharto in 1998.

The vast majority of Muslims in the nation of 237 million practice moderate Islam.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Taliban claims to have kidnapped 50 Afghan police

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—The Taliban claimed Sunday that it kidnapped 50 Afghan policemen in northeastern Afghanistan—part of the insurgents' murder and intimidation campaign against anyone affiliated with the U.S.-backed government. Also Sunday, a NATO service member was killed in a roadside bombing in southern Afghanistan, the coalition said. No details were released about the death, which raised to 94 the number of international troops killed in Afghanistan so far this year. Militants ambushed the policemen Saturday afternoon after being tipped off that they would be traveling in Kunar province, Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid said in an emailed statement to reporters. The policemen from Nuristan province had just finished their training to join the Afghan National Police, he said.

Filipino rebels: Radical commander faces expulsion

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A radical commander opposed to peace talks has a month to decide whether to stay in the Philippines's largest Muslim rebel group or be expelled with a few hundred loyalists, a rebel leader said Sunday. The Moro Islamic Liberation Front's problem with one of its most hardline commanders, Ameril Umbra Kato, has raised concerns whether the 11,000-strong group can deliver on any accord that can emerge from talks with the government to settle a bloody decades-long rebellion. Security forces have been on alert amid Kato's possible breakaway from the main rebel group, which has observed a truce with government troops.

US-Philippine military drills may be scaled back

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Officials say annual exercises involving thousands of U.S. and Filipino troops will be held next month as scheduled but may be scaled back because of U.S. military relief operations in Japan following its massive earthquake and tsunami. Philippine military spokesman Maj. Enrico Ileto said Sunday that humanitarian missions such as school construction during the April 5-15 Balikatan exercises will proceed as planned but some field maneuvers may be affected by the U.S. military's relief activities in Japan. U.S. Embassy spokeswoman Rebecca Thompson said some "transportation assets" for the exercises can possibly be shifted to Japan. Details of other possible changes are to be announced later.

World

WORLD BRIEFS

Gangs of armed young men roam Syrian seaside city

LATAKIA, Syria (AP)—Gangs of young men, some armed with swords and hunting rifles, roamed Sunday through the streets of a Syrian seaside city, closing alleys with barricades and roughly questioning passersby in streets scarred by days of anti-government unrest. The scenes in Latakia, a Mediterranean port once known as a summmer tourist draw, were a remarkable display of anarchy in what had been one of the Mideast's most tightly controlled countries. Syria has been rocked by more than a week of demonstrations that began in the drought-parched southern agricultural city of Daraa and exploded nationwide on Friday, with security forces opening fire on demonstrators in at least six places and killing dozens.

Yemen's leader drops offer to leave by year's end

SANAA, Yemen (AP)—Yemen's president, clinging to power despite weeks of protests, scrapped an offer to step down by year's end on Sunday, as Islamic militants taking advantage of the deteriorating security took control of another southern town. Opponents of President Ali Abdullah Saleh—a group that started with university students and has expanded to include defecting military commanders, politicians, diplomats and even Saleh's own tribe—had immediately rejected his offer a week ago to leave by the end of this year. Its formal withdrawal by the president indicates an attempt by both sides to negotiate a transfer of power to end the crisis has failed.

Israel deploys rocket defense system against Gaza

BEERSHEBA, Israel (AP)—Israel deployed a cutting-edge rocket defense system on Sunday, rolling out the latest tool in its arsenal to stop a recent spike in attacks from the neighboring Gaza Strip. Israel hopes the homegrown Iron Dome system will provide increased security to its citizens, but officials warned that it can't do the job alone. The system went into operation shortly after an Israeli aircraft struck a group of militants in Gaza, killing two. Israeli said they were about to fire a rocket. The Iron Dome system has raised hopes that Israel has finally found a solution to the years of rocket fire from Gaza. The primitive rockets have evaded Israel's high-tech weaponry, in part because their short flight path, just a few seconds, makes them hard to track.

Cuba dissidents march again after relatives freed

HAVANA (AP)—A Cuban dissident group formed to demand freedom for imprisoned relatives is continuing its weekly protests despite the liberation of the last of their family members. Ladies in White founder Laura Pollan says the group will continue its activities to demand freedom for all prisoners of conscience and for human rights. The group began weekly Sunday marches near Havana's cathedral after the government arrested 75 dissidents in 2003 and accused them of working with the U.S. government to undermine Cuba's socialist system. Most of the protesters were wives or relatives of the 75. The last of the dissidents were released this week under a deal with the Roman Catholic Church. Sunday's march was the first since then.

Air raids hit Gadhafi stronghold of Sirte

RAS LANOUF, Libya (AP)—International air raids targeted Moammar Gadhafi's hometown of Sirte for the first time Sunday night as rebels quickly closed in on the regime stronghold, a formidable obstacle that must be overcome for government opponents to reach the capital Tripoli.

A heavy bombardment of Tripoli also began after nightfall, with at least nine loud explosions and anti-aircraft fire heard, an Associated Press reporter in the city said.

Earlier in the day, rebels regained two key oil complexes along the coastal highway that runs from the opposition-held eastern half of the country toward Sirte and beyond that, to the capital. Moving quickly westward, the advance retraced their steps in the first rebel march toward the capital. But this time, the world's most powerful air forces have eased the way by pounding Gadhafi's military assets for the past week.

■ ■ ■

BRUSSELS (AP)—NATO will assume command of all aerial operations in Libya from the U.S.-led force that has been conducting air strikes against Moammar Gadhafi's forces, officials said Sunday.

NATO jets on Sunday already began enforcing the no-fly zone, Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen announced. Diplomats said the full transfer of authority would take several days.

"NATO allies have decided to take on the whole military operation in Libya under the U.N. Security Council resolution," Fogh Rasmussen said in a statement. "NATO will implement all aspects of the U.N. resolution. Nothing more, nothing less."

The North Atlantic Council—the alliance's top body—took two hours to approve a plan to expand a previously agreed mission to enforce the U.N. arms embargo and no-fly zone. It agreed to protect civilians from attack—which effectively means bombing Gadhafi's forces if they are threatening to harm the civilian population.

■ ■ ■

Sirte is strategically located about halfway between the rebel-held east and the Gadhafi-controlled west along the Mediterranean coast. It is a bastion of support for Gadhafi that will be difficult for the rebels to overrun and the entrances to the city have reportedly been mined. If the rebels could somehow overcome Sirte, momentum for a march on the capital would skyrocket.

An AP reporter at the front said the latest rebel advance during the day reached as far west as the oil port of Ras Lanouf, about 130 miles (210 kilometers) east of Sirte.

After nightfall, Libyan state television confirmed air raids on Sirte and Tripoli. Foreign journalists who were taken by the regime to Sirte a few hours before the bombings began reported hearing at least six loud explosions and warplanes flying overheard. They were driven around the city and said it was swarming with soldiers on patrol and armed civilians, many of them wearing green bandanas that signaled their support for Gadhafi.

In the contested city of Misrata in western Libya, residents reported fighting between rebels and Gadhafi loyalists who fired from tanks on residential areas. Misrata is one of two cities in western Libya that have risen against the regime and suffered brutal crackdowns. It is located between Tripoli and Sirte on the coastal road.

AP

Qatari and French Air Force ground crew works to prepare a Qatar Mirage 2000 jet fighter at Souda Hellenic (Greek) Air Force Base, on Crete, an island of Greece, Sunday, March 27, 2011.

In Washington, Defense Secretary Robert Gates said he could not offer a timetable for how long the Libya operation could last, as the Obama administration tried to bolster its case for bringing the United States into another war in the Muslim world.

The U.N. Security Council authorized the operation to protect Libyan civilians after Gadhafi launched attacks against anti-government protesters who demanded that he step down after nearly 42 years in power. The airstrikes have crippled Gadhafi's forces, allowing rebels to advance less than two weeks after they had seemed at the brink of defeat.

Now that the rebels have regained control of two key oil ports, they are making tentative plans to exploit Libya's most valuable natural resource. But production is at a trickle, the foreign oil workers and their vital expertise have fled the country, and even talk of a marketing deal with Qatar seems murky at best.

"As they move round the coast, of course, the rebels will increasingly control the exit points of Libya's oil," British Defense Secretary Liam Fox told the BBC. "That will produce a very dynamic and a very different equilibrium inside Libya. How that will play out in terms of public opinion and the Gadhafi regime remains to be seen."

The coastal complexes at Ras Lanouf and Brega were responsible for a large chunk of Libya's 1.5 million barrels of daily exports, which have all but stopped since the uprising that began Feb. 15 and was inspired by the toppling of governments in Tunisia and Egypt.

On the eastern approach of Ras Lanouf, airstrikes hit three empty tank transporters and left two buildings that appeared to be sleeping quarters pockmarked with shrapnel. Like the oil port of Brega and the city of Ajdabiya before it, Gadhafi's troops appear to have left in a hurry, abandoning ammunition and disappearing without a fight.

"There was no resistance. Gadhafi's forces just melted away," said Suleiman Ibrahim, a 31-year-old volunteer, sitting in the back of a pickup truck on the road between the two towns. "This couldn't have happened without NATO. They gave us big support."

The agreement with the tiny Gulf nation of Qatar could allow the rebels to exploit Libya's vast oil reserves—most of which are in the eastern territory they control. With no ships coming or going, Libya's tanks are full to the brim. Until they are emptied, there's nowhere to store any oil that is pumped from the ground.

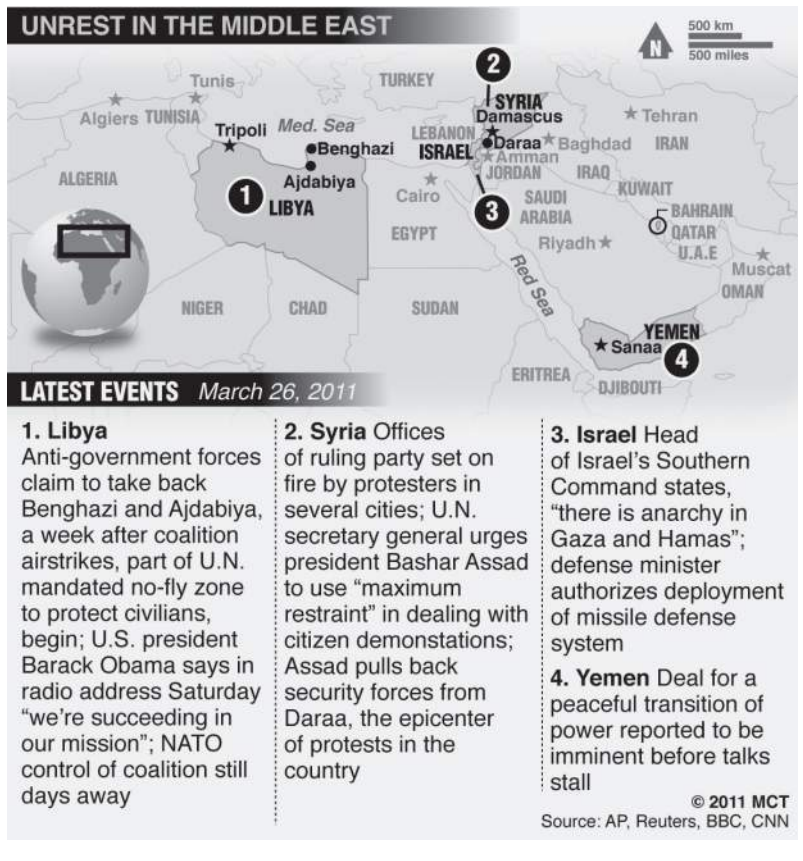
Qatar, which has conducted at least one sortie over Libya, is the only Arab country known to have actively joined with the international force.

"We trust them, so basically they are the ones who are going to market our oil for us," Ali Tarhouni, the rebel finance official, told The Associated Press on Friday. "For Qatar there's no words to describe what they've done for the Libyan cause."

Officials at Qatar's ministry of energy and industry could not be reached for comment. Executives with the Arabian Gulf Oil Co., the National Oil Co. subsidiary in the east that broke free from its parent company, also could not be reached. Repeated calls to Libya's oil minister went unanswered.

Eastern oil officials said over a week ago they were still producing about 100,000 barrels per day from two key fields. But it was unclear whether such levels were sustainable given the security problems across the country and the exodus of foreign workers from the vital sector.

The Paris-based International Energy Agency said recently it believed that Libyan oil production had "slowed to a trickle" while exports had "ground to a halt." The IEA said it believed it could take months for Libyan oil to reappear on the world market.



Focus

In this photo taken Feb. 20, 2011, Judy Bates searches on her computer looking for good deals at her home, in Dora, Ala.

AP

“It feels far more painful now than in the ‘80s.”

—Judy Bates

Why inflation hurts more than it did 30 years ago

WASHINGTON (AP)—Inflation spooked America in the early 1980s. It surged and kept rising until it topped 13 percent.

These days, inflation is much lower. Yet to many Americans, it feels worse now. And for a good reason: Their income has been even flatter than inflation.

Back in the ‘80’s, the money people made typically more than made up for high inflation. In 1981, banks would pay nearly 16 percent on a six-month CD. And workers typically got pay raises to match their higher living costs.

No more.

Over the 12 months that ended in February, consumer prices increased just 2.1 percent. Yet wages for many people have risen even less—if they’re not actually frozen.

Social Security recipients have gone two straight years with no increase in benefits. Money market rates? You need a magnifying glass to find them.

That’s why even moderate inflation hurts more now. And it’s why if food and gas prices lift inflation even slightly above current rates, consumer spending could weaken and slow the economy.

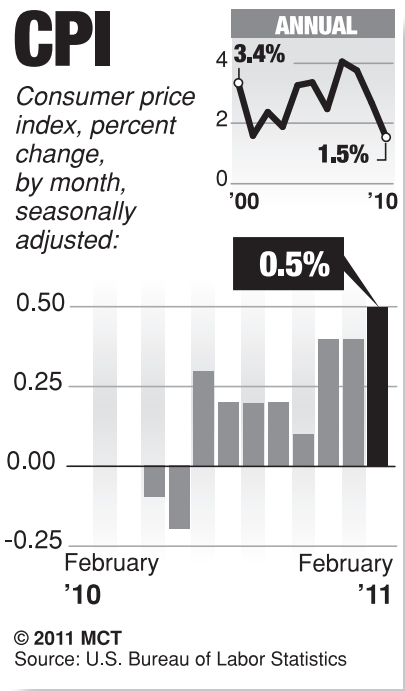
“It feels far more painful now than in the ‘80s,” says Judy Bates, who lives near Birmingham, Alabama. “Money in the bank was growing like crazy because interest rates were high. My husband had a union job at a steel company and was getting cost-of-living raises and working overtime galore.”

Bates, 58, makes her living writing and speaking about how people can stretch their dollars. Her husband, 61, is retired. They’ve paid off their mortgage and have no car payments. But they’re facing higher prices for food, gas, utilities, insurance and health care, while fetching measly returns on their savings.

“You want to weep,” Bates says.

Consumer inflation did pick up in February, rising 0.5 percent, because of costlier food and gas. Still, looked at over the past 12 months, price increases have remained low. Problem is, these days any inflation tends to hurt.

Not that everyone has been squeezed the same. It depends on personal circumstances. Some families with low expenses or generous pay increases have been little affected.



Others who are heavy users of items whose prices have jumped—tuition, medical care, gasoline—have been hurt badly. But almost everyone is being pinched because nationally, income has stagnated.

The median U.S. inflation-adjusted household income—wages and investment income—fell to $49,777 in 2009, the most recent year for which figures are available, the Census Bureau says. That was 0.7 percent less than in 2008.

Incomes probably dipped last year to $49,650, estimates Lynn Reaser, chief economist at Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego and a board member of the National Association for Business Economics. That would mark a 0.3 percent drop from 2009. And incomes are likely to fall again this year—to $49,300, she says.

Significant pay raises are rare during periods of high unemployment because workers have little bargaining power to demand them.

They surely aren’t making it up at the bank. Last year, the average U.S. rate on a six-month CD was 0.44 percent. The rate on a money market account was even lower: 0.21 percent.

Now go back three decades, a time of galloping inflation, interest rates and bond yields. When Paul Volcker took over the Federal Reserve in 1979, consumer inflation was 13.3 percent, the highest since 1946. To shrink inflation, Volcker raised interest rates to levels not seen since the U.S. Civil War of 1861-1865.

As interest rates soared, CD and money-market rates did, too. The average rate on money market accounts topped 9 percent. Treasury yields surged, pushing up rates on consumer and business loans. The 10-year Treasury note yielded more than 13 percent; today, it’s 3.5 percent.

By 1984, consumers were enjoying a sweet spot: Lower prices but rising incomes and still-historically high rates on CDs and other savings investments. Consumer inflation had slid to 3.9 percent. Yet you could still get 10.7 percent on a six-month CD.

Even after accounting for inflation, the median income rose 3.1 percent from 1983 to 1984. At the time, workers were demanding—and receiving—higher wages.

More than 20 percent of U.S. workers belonged to a union in 1983. Labor contracts typically provided cost-of-living adjustments tied to inflation. And competition for workers meant those union pay increases helped push up income for non-union workers, too.

Last year, just 12 percent of U.S. workers belonged to unions. And among union members, a majority now work for the government, not private companies. Wages of government workers are under assault as state governments and the federal government seek to cut spending and narrow gaping budget deficits.

Workers’ average weekly wages, adjusted for inflation, fell in February to $351.89. It was the third drop in four months.

The result is that even historically low inflation feels high. So “when you mention low inflation to real people on the street, they immediately roll their eyes,” says Greg McBride, senior financial analyst at Bankrate.com.

Falling behind inflation is something many people hadn’t experienced much in their working careers until now. In the 1990s and 2000s, for instance, most Americans kept ahead of rising prices. Inflation averaged under 3 percent.

And inflation-adjusted incomes rose steadily from 1994 to 1999. Once the 2001 recession hit, incomes did falter. But after that, they resumed their growth, rising each year until the most recent recession hit in December 2007.

Rates on six-month CDs were also much higher than they are now: They averaged 5.4 percent from 1990 to 1999 and 3.3 percent from 2000 to 2009.

These days, though, Americans face the certainty of higher prices ahead.

Nike Inc., facing higher costs for materials, freight and other things, said Thursday it plans to raise prices on a range of products starting this spring. The company makes athletic shoes and clothing.

Whirlpool, Kraft, McDonald’s, Clorox, Kellogg, and clothing companies such as Wrangler jeans maker VF Corp., and J.C. Penney Co., also say they plan to raise prices. Whirlpool, which makes Maytag and KitchenAid appliances, says it’s raising prices in response to higher raw material costs.

Kellogg, which makes Frosted Flakes and Pop Tarts, is increasing prices on some products to offset costlier ingredients. Kellogg is responding to soaring costs for commodities including wheat, corn, sugar, cotton, beef and pork.

Vickens Moscova, a self-employed marketer in Elizabeth, New Jersey, says he’s paying more for staples like cereal, bread, eggs and public transportation. Yet he’s making little from his savings.

“It is a huge pinch,” says Moscova, 25.

Though higher gasoline and food prices may lift the inflation rate in coming months, the Fed says it doesn’t think inflation will pose a long-term threat to the economy. The central bank projects that inflation won’t exceed 1.7 percent this year.

But if oil prices, now around $101 a barrel, were to go much higher, economists say heavier fuel bills would cause people and consumers to cut back spending on cars, appliances and other items.

Another recession would be possible if prices began to approach $150 a barrel. Back in 1983, a barrel of oil cost just $29.40—or $65 in today’s prices, adjusted for inflation.

All that said, today’s consumers are fortunate that today’s lower rates mean one major household cost remains far lower than in the 1980s: a mortgage.

Thanks, in part, to the Fed’s efforts to push down loan rates starting with the financial crisis, the average rate on a 30 year fixed mortgage is below 5 percent.

The comparable rate in 1981? 18 percent.

Overdrive

2011 Honda CR-Z

Three driving modes in one fun car

By BARRY SPYKER
MCCLATCHY NEWSPAPERS

As it turned out, the first clue that the 2011 Honda CR-Z hybrid was something exciting and versatile was the trio of buttons on the left side of the dash: They're marked Sport, Normal and Econ.

The difference among these modes is truly distinct: Torque, steering and road feel are so varied it's amazing that all these performances are coming out of the same car. I guess it proves you really can have it all.

And who would've thought a hybrid could be this much fun? It's a sporty-looking, two-seat seat animal—one that offers a six-speed manual tranny. But hit the Econ mode and it's a soft-driving, low-torque gas miser.

And the Normal mode is for those who want to have their cake and eat at least some of it. Let's say it's for those who just want a little fun with their green.

If you remember the '80s, you yuppies and Valley girls, you might be tempted to compare the CR-Z to the CRX, another sporty, two-seater from Honda that pledged economy with a fun drive.

Truth is, it's really more closely related to Honda's Insight hybrid, sharing many of the underpinnings, its suspension.

But Honda shortened the CR-Z by a foot or so, widened the rack and brought the roof height down a bit. There you have it: a fun, agile sports car—and the only two-seat hybrid on the market.

Outside, it could pass for something out of Star Wars, with its raked back rear—its C pillar is practically horizontal. It is a sharp look; a hybrid with an attitude. However, the style hampers rear visibility.

Under the hood is Insight's hybrid system, except the CR-Z gets a 1.5-liter engine rather than the 1.3 in the Insight. That accounts for 112 hp and torque rated at 107 pound-feet.

The electric motor adds another 13 horses to the equation and, more important, 58 more pound-feet of torque. In Sport mode, it's the electric motor that's giving the CR-Z more punch off the line and quicker throttle response.

NUTS & BOLTS

Base Price: $19,345
As tested: $23,960 (EX with navigation)

A six-speed manual tranny is standard and offers clean shifts, especially compared to the Fit. A CVT (Continuously Variable Transmission) is common fare for hybrids but is optional here. I'm not a big fan of the CVT but at least it has paddle shifters to raise the ante on fun a bit.

On the road, it offers reasonable road grip on corners. But this is not a true sports car, and you'll discover that if you really push it. Still, it accelerates and handles well enough, steering is sharp, and there are plenty more kicks than any other hybrid out there.

For the record, the CVT version is a fraction of a second quicker to 60 mph at 9.3 seconds.

Ah, but there's always a price for joy. In this case, it comes in rather disappointing mileage figures—for a hybrid, that is. Insight has it beat big-time, but it's also lagging against most of the hybrid gang.

With the manual, the CR-Z gets around 31 mpg city, 37 on the highway; the CVT does a little better at around 35 mpg around town, 39 on the open road.

Mileage is improved by an Idle Stop feature, which shuts down the engine when not in use.

Inside the CR-Z is a reflection of its futuristic exterior: a futuristic-looking instrument cluster in blue and white against a black background. It will glow green at max efficiency.

Audio and climate controls are well organized, on separate pods for easy access and use. There are some hard plastics inside but most touch surfaces have a nice feel.

Seats are on the firmer side but not uncomfortably so. Lumbar support is excellent.

There is no raised center console, which I quickly miss—can't help relying on it for elbow support getting in and out and while driving. But in place of a console, it does have three cup holders and two slots to stash stuff.

And, while there's no back seat for folks, there is 25 cubic feet of cargo space with the cargo wall lowered. When folded flat, there's ample room for groceries or a couple of bags of mulch and plants from the Home Depot.

CR-Z scores well in safety with six air bags, including side-curtain bags, plus traction and stability control.

The base model is nicely equipped with full automatic accessories and climate control, tilt and telescoping wheel and six-speaker audio system. Move up to the EX and get fog lights, aluminum trim, leather steering wheel and an upgraded seven-speaker audio system. Options include a nav system, 17-inch wheels with performance tires and satellite radio.

The CR-Z is for those who seek thrills with their smaller footprint. If it's pure economy you seek from a hybrid, you can do better.

But NADAguides.com, which named the CR-Z its Car of the Month in February, reported an 89 percent increase in consumer interest during the last quarter of 2010.

That tells me a lot of folks are willing to compromise a bit of economy for a healthy serving of fun.

Cruise control can save gasoline, but not always

By STEVEN COLE SMITH
THE ORLANDO SENTINEL

QUESTION: Two of us in the office have a bet we hope you can settle. Does using the cruise control save gas, or use more gas? Lunch depends on it.—Riley, Orlando, Fla.

ANSWER: Looks like you two will have to go Dutch—sometimes cruise control saves fuel, sometimes it uses more. Here's why: On a level road where it's easy to maintain one set speed, cruise control typically saves gas, as it holds the throttle at one set position rather than varying throttle input, which occurs with most drivers and burns more gas. But if the road is the least bit hilly, cruise control can burn more gas, as the engine speed increases and often the automatic transmission will downshift to a lower, less efficient gear as the cruise control tries to maintain your set speed.

You, as a driver in control of the throttle, might let your speed drop a few miles an hour as you climb the hill, rather than press the accelerator harder, which increases speed, which uses more fuel. This is especially true with smaller, less powerful engines, as they will generally have to rev up to maintain speed going up a hill.

Heavy vehicles can also be inefficient with cruise engaged. (Driving a big motor home, I used about 10 percent more gasoline with the cruise control than without, because every time we came to even a slight uphill grade, the engine sped up and the transmission downshifted to keep up the speed.) With the cruise off, I'd let the speed vary on its own, and increase throttle input slightly and gradually. The only way to tell for sure with your car: Do your own test on a highway you drive regularly.

■ ■ ■ ■

Q: What does it cost to replace an airbag?—K.C.

A: It varies enormously, from about $300 to over $3,000 for luxury imports. Usually a replacement airbag and installation will cost about $1,000.

Steven Cole Smith is the automotive editor at the Orlando Sentinel in Florida. Send questions to scsmith@orlandosentinel.com.

Stability control lends a hand in sudden swerves

By BRAD BERGHOLDT
MCCLATCHY-TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

QUESTION: I just purchased a new Toyota Camry and am familiarizing myself with several features that are new to me. My question pertains to the "Vehicle Stability Control." I read that this can reduce engine power. The car is equipped with an on/off switch for the VSC, should I turn it off in order to have maximum power?—Teck Ky

ANSWER: Electronic stability control has many different names, depending on the vehicle manufacturer, and is considered to be one of the most significant safety enhancements to come along, behind seat belts. In fact, government regulations have required an aggressive phase-in of stability control, with all new passenger vehicles under 10,000 pounds being equipped by 2012.

Electronic stability control blends the smarts and information-sharing abilities of a modern vehicle's braking and engine control systems, along with a few new sensors, to help you avoid losing control during extreme driving maneuvers.

Let's say a deer hops out in front of your vehicle on a rain-swept highway, and you swerve sharply to avoid hitting it. A steering angle sensor observes your intended course, and should the yaw (vehicle rotation) and lateral G (side motion) sensors indicate the vehicle isn't sufficiently following orders, the system intervenes by reducing engine throttle and selectively applying one or more brakes to help you make the maneuver. More importantly, when you attempt to swerve back on course, the system kicks in to help keep the back end of the car behind you.

Another scenario might be that you have misjudged the appropriate speed for a corner, and the vehicle begins to either plow straight (understeering) or go into a spin (oversteering). The electronic stability control system will do its best to mitigate the condition and keep you on the roadway.

Stability control waits quietly in the background during normal driving maneuvers and only intervenes when things go wrong, so you won't feel any power reduction during normal driving. There are times turning off stability control may be helpful: when stuck in snow, mud or sand, or if the spare tire is in use. Highly skilled drivers may choose to turn it off so they can push the limits of road-holding without intervention, but for most of us, leaving the switch on is best.

I've found stability control on recent vehicles to be a bit less invasive and punitive than those of several years past. Rather than a large, lingering power loss that seems like a scolding, newer systems will give you the warning beep and assist more gently.

Long Truong, one of my students, offers this thoughtful suggestion: If you notice your stability-control tone or indicator occurring at any time that doesn't seem to be an extreme maneuver, be sure to check your tire pressure and tread condition right way. His concern is stability control could mask a tire deficiency that would otherwise be more noticeable. Sharp kid!

Remember this: Electronic stability control cannot increase traction or help you go around corners faster. It is there to help reel you in when you ask for more than the car, and the laws of physics, can deliver.

Brad Bergholdt is an automotive technology instructor at Evergreen Valley College in San Jose, Calif. Readers may send him e-mail at under-the-hood@earthlink.net; he cannot make personal replies.

Life & Style

Docs warn about Facebook use and teen depression

By LINDSEY TANNER
AP MEDICAL WRITER

CHICAGO (AP)—Add "Facebook depression" to potential harms linked with social media, an influential doctors' group warns, referring to a condition it says may affect troubled teens who obsess over the online site.

Researchers disagree on whether it's simply an extension of depression some kids feel in other circumstances, or a distinct condition linked with using the online site.

But there are unique aspects of Facebook that can make it a particularly tough social landscape to navigate for kids already dealing with poor self-esteem, said Dr. Gwenn O'Keeffe, a Boston-area pediatrician and lead author of new American Academy of Pediatrics social media guidelines.

With in-your-face friends' tallies, status updates and photos of happy-looking people having great times, Facebook pages can make some kids feel even worse if they think they don't measure up.

It can be more painful than sitting alone in a crowded school cafeteria or other real-life encounters that can make kids feel down, O'Keeffe said, because Facebook provides a skewed view of what's really going on. Online, there's no way to see facial expressions or read body language that provide context.

The guidelines urge pediatricians to encourage parents to talk with their kids about online use and to be aware of Facebook depression, cyberbullying, sexting and other online risks. They were published online Monday in Pediatrics.

Abby Abolt, 16, a Chicago high school sophomore and frequent Facebook user, says the site has never made her feel depressed, but that she can understand how it might affect some kids.

"If you really didn't have that many friends and weren't really doing much with your life, and saw other peoples' status updates and pictures and what they were doing with friends, I could see how that would make them upset," she said.

"It's like a big popularity contest—who can get the most friend requests or get the most pictures tagged," she said.

Also, it's common among some teens to post snotty or judgmental messages on the Facebook walls of people they don't like, said Gaby Navarro, 18, a senior from Grayslake, Illinois. It's happened to her friends, and she said she could imagine how that could make some teens feel depressed.

"Parents should definitely know" about these practices," Navarro said. "It's good to raise awareness about it."

The academy guidelines note that online harassment "can cause profound psychosocial outcomes," including suicide. The widely publicized suicide of a 15-year-old Massachusetts girl last year occurred after she'd been bullied and harassed, in person and on Facebook.

"Facebook is where all the teens are hanging out now. It's their corner store," O'Keeffe said.

She said the benefits of kids using social media sites like Facebook shouldn't be overlooked, however, such as connecting with friends and family, sharing pictures and exchanging ideas.

"A lot of what's happening is actually very healthy, but it can go too far," she said.

Dr. Megan Moreno, a University of Wisconsin adolescent medicine specialist who has studied online social networking among college students, said using Facebook can enhance feelings of social connectedness among well-adjusted kids, and have the opposite effect on those prone to depression.

Parents shouldn't get the idea that using Facebook "is going to somehow infect their kids with depression," she said.

For those with autism, documentary offers new hope

MONTPELIER, Vermont (AP)—When Tracy Thresher has something to say, he uses his right index finger—and a special computer that gives voice to what he types. Hunched over the device, he begins.

Tap, tap, tap. Tap, tap, tap. Tap, tap, tap, tap....

Autism silences the 43-year-old Vermont man. He doesn't speak. But he has a message for the world about how people should think of people like him. So he taps it out.

"To think intelligence, even if you see wacky, goofy behavior. We are simply intelligence, shown in a different way," comes the robotic voice, broadcast out of his computer.

Thresher and friend Larry Bissonnette, 53, who have been advocates for 10 years for people with autism and the disabled community at large, are about to get a new platform for spreading their can-do message: They're the focus of "Wretches and Jabberers," a documentary film opening next week in 40 cities that makes the point that "disabled" doesn't mean "dumb."

"Wretches" is what they jokingly call themselves after picking up the term from another person with autism. To them, "Jabberers" are people who can speak.

At turns funny, warm and sad, the 90-minute film, which premieres Friday in New York City and then in AMC Theatres nationally a day later, follows Thresher and Bissonnette to Sri Lanka, Japan and Finland on a mission to change people's attitudes about disability, intelligence and communication.

Along the way, they're seen dodging traffic, talking about the meaning of life with a Buddhist monk and bathing in a Finnish sauna.

Directed by Academy Award-winning director Gerardine Wurzburg, it was underwritten by the John P. Hussman Foundation, an Ellicott City, Maryland, organization that provides aid to people with significant disabilities.

"My motivation is about changing the general public's perception about people with different abilities," says Wurzburg. "That's what this film does. It challenges people's perceptions about autism and it communicates it through the perspective of people labeled by society.

"At the core, it's a human rights and civil rights issue," said Wurzburg, whose other films include Oscar-winning "Educating Peter" (1992) and "Autism is a World" (2005), which was nominated for an Academy Award.

Autism, which has no known single cause, is a developmental disability that affects a person's ability to communicate and interact with others.

AP

In a March 23, 2011 photo, Larry Bissonnette, 53, of Milton, right, and Tracy Thresher, 43, of Barre Town, are seen in Montpelier, Vt. The two, who suffer from autism and don't speak, have become globe-trotting ambassadors with a message. "We are simply intelligence, shown in a different way," says Thresher.

Thresher and Bissonnette suffered in silence for much of their lives, until the advent of what's known as augmentative or alternative communication devices. Typically, the devices consist of special keyboards equipped with voice output software that turn typed words into spoken ones.

Thresher, who lived at home until he was 21, went to public schools. Bissonnette was institutionalized into his 20s, at the now-closed Brandon Training School and the Vermont State Hospital.

"It was hard growing up," said Thresher's mother, Susan Thresher, 62, of Barre Town. "It was difficult going to school and being shut in a room doing a puzzle, when you've got such intelligence upstairs that he couldn't explain to everybody, just how he knew everything that was going on.

"He would be so upset when he got home, and there was no way I knew how he was upset or from what," she said.

Like Thresher, Bissonnette, who has more speech capability, has flourished by having access to the equipment. When he's not on the road with Thresher, he works as an artist from a home studio in Milton, Vermont, where he lives with his mother and sister.

Once "retards" and social outcasts, they've evolved into sought-after speakers at conferences and workshops, stressing the theme of empowerment in the face of severe handicaps.

Wurzburg saw them at an autism conference in California three years ago and got the idea to use their perspectives to tell the story of silent autism patients.

In person, they riff like a pair of show business partners.

Last week, they held forth one afternoon in a cafeteria in Vermont's statehouse, sitting at a table—accompanied by helpers Harvey Lavoy and Pascal Cheng—before a roomful of disability advocates and clients who had come for a screening of "Wretches and Jabberers."

The men had just come from a visit to Syracuse, New York.

Hunched over their devices, they pecked away at the keyboards and waited for the words to be converted into sound by voice output software. It takes patience—for them and their listeners. The words come slowly.

"Hello, everyone," came the voice from Thresher's computer. "How are you doing today? I just drove in on the Syracuse express and would like to welcome you to the Larry and Tracy show. We are looking to answer your questions and entertain you at the same time, so here we go..."

Claudia Pringles, 47, the mother of an 11-year-old girl with autism, asked the two what advice they had for parents like her.

"That is easy," replied Thresher. "Believe in their intelligence, presume competence and most of all don't sideline them. Make sure they live a life with dignity, having a purpose in life."

Someone else asked how it felt to be movie stars.

Tap, tap, tap. Tap, tap, tap. Tap, tap, tap.

"It opens up dating possibilities," typed Thresher. "Moving with beautiful people, magazine celebrity status."

Bissonnette pecked at his keyboard. "It keeps me in movie star shape. Lots of fine beer and food," came his answer.

"Does the title of the movie bother you?" they were asked.

"Papers need a good headline, and I need a more weird label," Bissonnette answered.

The film's makers are already busy fielding requests for Thresher and Bissonnette to be keynote speakers at conferences.

"It's like Helen Keller changed things. Larry and Tracy are going to change things for people who have autism and don't have normal ways to communicate," Wurzburg said.

OMG! Online abbreviations make the OED

LONDON (AP)—OMG! The exclamatory online abbreviation has won the approval of the Oxford English Dictionary.

The term—short for "Oh my God" or "Oh my gosh"—is one of dozens of new entries in the authoritative reference book's latest online update.

Other Internet-inspired expressions given the stamp of approval include LOL, "laughing out loud"; IMHO, "in my humble opinion"; and BFF, "best friends forever."

Dictionary compilers said that although the terms are associated with modern electronic communications, some are surprisingly old. The first confirmed use of "OMG" was in a letter in 1917.

"Things people think are new words normally have a longer history," Graeme Diamond, the dictionary's principal editor for new words, said Friday.

"Who knows how many people from 1917 onwards were using that term, in correspondence that we just don't have access to. With the advent of the mass media we have access to much more personal information."

That helps explain a flood of new terms from the online world, including ego-surfing—the practice of searching for your own name on the Internet—and dot bomb, a failed Internet company.

Not all the new abbreviations originated online. One new entry is wag, for "wives and girlfriends." First used in 2002 to describe the female partners of the England soccer team, it is now used to denote the glamorous and extravagant female partners of male celebrities.

"By our standards WAG is a real rocket of a word," Diamond said. "To go from being coined in 2002 to being included in 2011 is quite unusual."

The new update includes about 900 new words and meanings, from "flat white"—a milky espresso-based drink originating from Australia and New Zealand—to "muffin top," defined as "a protuberance of flesh above the waistband of a tight pair of trousers."

The dictionary also includes a new entry for "heart" as a verb, a casual equivalent of "to love" that is represented with a symbol, as seen on millions of souvenirs proclaiming "I (heart) New York."

Editors publish updates to the online Oxford every three months. The Internet version of the dictionary, which launched in 2000, gets 2 million hits a month from subscribers and may eventually replace the mammoth 20-volume printed Oxford English Dictionary, last published in 1989.

Taylor estate will earn dollars from scents

This Sept. 11, 1991 file photo shows actress Elizabeth Taylor as she holds a $100,000 special edition of her new White Diamonds fragrance at a news conference in New York.

AP

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Elizabeth Taylor's last acting job was about a decade ago, but her lucrative line of fragrances will likely keep her estate smelling great long after her passing.

Her perfume brand, White Diamonds, remains a best-seller, and combined with other brands Passion and Passion for Men, Taylor's scents brought in an estimated $69 million at retail worldwide last year, according to tracking firm Euromonitor International.

While that's down about a fifth compared to two years earlier, a wave of recollections and renewed interest in her movies could provide a short-term boost to sales. Experts say anywhere from 4 to 15 percent of sales likely flows through to Taylor's estate in the form of licensing royalties.

Taylor, who died Wednesday at age 79, actively promoted her brands.

But White Diamonds, introduced in 1991 has become so popular, with an estimated $61 million in sales, that it is considered to have crossed over from celebrity status to mainstream perfume.

"This is beyond just Elizabeth Taylor at this point," said Michael Stone, the chief executive of brand licensing agency The Beanstalk Group. "That's why I think the fragrance will survive her death."

Cosmetics company Elizabeth Arden Inc. remains her exclusive fragrance partner with a license through October 2022, according to its annual report, and can renew the deal in 20-year increments at its discretion.

Celebrity beauty products endorsed by stars such as Taylor, Britney Spears, Mariah Carey and Usher made up 22 percent of the company's $1.1 billion in revenue last year.

"Our best tribute to Elizabeth Taylor will be to continue the legacy of the brands she created and loved so much," Elizabeth Arden CEO E. Scott Beattie said in a statement Wednesday. He noted that Taylor's line is "one of the most successful brands in fragrance history."

The NPD Group ranked White Diamonds the 45th-best seller in the U.S. last year compared to all fragrances, including stalwarts like Chanel No. 5.

It's unclear what will become of her estate, and her lawyer Barbara Berkowitz did not respond to messages seeking comment. Publicist Sally Morrison declined to give details.

Brand experts said the executors of her estate may already be fielding calls about new licensing deals that seek to capitalize on her glamorous lifestyle and image.

"You can just go right down the line of these female celebrities that are fashion icons, that are brands," said Mark Roesler, the chief executive of CMG Worldwide, a rights management company whose clients include the estates of James Dean and Marilyn Monroe. "That's certainly not going to die."

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Sucker Punch
Friday 4:25 7:25 9:35
Saturday 1:25 4:25 7:25 9:35
Sunday 1:25 4:25 7:25
Mon thru Thurs 4:25 7:25
Emily Browning, Abbie Cornish
Action, Fantasy, Adventure • Rated PG 13

Synopsis
Zack Snyder presents a hyper-violent spin on Alice in Wonderland for his directorial follow-up to Watchmen with this Cruel and Unusual Films production for Warner Bros. The plot details the action-packed fantasy world of a mental patient (Emily Browning), who escapes from her reality to deal with her abusive stepfather.

Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules
Friday 4:20 7:20 9:40
Saturday 1:20 4:20 7:20 9:40
Sunday 1:20 4:20 7:20
Mon thru Thurs 4:20 7:20
Zachary Gordon, Devon Bostick
Chicldren's, Family • Rated PG

Synopsis
Astro Boy director David Bowers helms the follow-up film to 2010's big screen adaptation of Jeff Kinney's acclaimed Diary of a Wimpy Kid comic novels in this Fox 2000 production. Zachary Gordon stars as the titular character who takes on his older bullish brother, Rodrick, in the sequel penned by Gabe Sachs and Jeff Judah.

★ ★ ★

Limitless
Friday 4:10 7:10 9:50
Saturday 1:10 4:10 7:10 9:50
Sunday 1:10 4:10 7:10
Mon thru Thurs 4:10 7:10
Bradley Cooper, Robert De Niro
Thriller, Science Fiction • Rated PG 13

Synopsis
The Illusionist's Neil Burger helms this adaptation of Alan Glynn's novel detailing what happens when a man stumbles upon a one-of-a-kind smart pill. Hairspray's Leslie Dixon provides the screenplay for the Universal production.

Paul
Friday 4:05 7:05 9:45
Saturday 1:05 4:05 7:05 9:45
Sunday 1:05 4:05 7:05
Mon thru Thurs 4:05 7:05
Simon Pegg, Nick Frost
Comedy • Rated R

Battle: Los Angeles
Friday 4:30 7:30 9:55
Saturday 1:30 4:30 7:30 9:55
Sunday 1:30 4:30 7:30
Mon thru Thurs 4:30 7:30
Aaron Eckhart, Michelle Rodriguez
Science Fiction • Rated PG 13

Red Riding Hood
Friday 4:15 7:15 10:00
Saturday 1:15 4:15 7:15 10:00
Sunday 1:15 4:15 7:15
Mon thru Thurs 4:15 7:15
Amanda Sayfried, Gary Oldman
Horror • Rated PG 13

Rango
Friday 4:00 7:00 9:30
Saturday 1:00 4:00 7:00 9:30
Sunday 1:00 4:00 7:00
Mon thru Thurs 4:00 7:00
Johnny Depp, Isla Fisher
Children's/Family • Rated G

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'Wimpy Kid' rules weekend with $24.4M opening

AP

Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules actors, Zachary Gordon, left, and Devon Bostick pose on the red carpet during the movie premiere on Thursday, March 24, 2011 at the Tapestry Charter High School in Buffalo, N.Y.

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A wimpy kid has delivered a knockout punch to a band of warrior vixens at the weekend box office.

The 20th Century Fox family sequel "Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules" debuted as the No. 1 movie with $24.4 million, according to studio estimates Sunday. The girl-power action fantasy "Sucker Punch," released by Warner Bros., opened at No. 2 with $19 million.

The previous weekend's top movie, Relativity Media's sci-fi thriller "Limitless," slipped to third with $15.2 million, raising its total to $41.3 million.

"Rodrick Rules" did a bit more business than its predecessor, "Diary of a Wimpy Kid," which opened a year ago with $22.1 million. The "Wimpy Kid" movies are based on the children's books by Jeff Kinney about a timid youth trying to cope at school and home.

The sequel casts wimpy kid Greg (Zachary Gordon) into sibling rivalry and bonding with one of his chief tormentors, older brother Rodrick (Devon Bostick).

Though its main characters are boys, the movie drew family crowds of both sexes, said Fox distribution executive Bert Livingston. The appeal of the story is in the title, he said.

"`Wimpy,' because every kid knows that feeling. That's why `Spider-Man' works. Everybody thinks that they could be the outsider who could be Spider-Man," Livingston said. "I think anyone can associate with that, and I think that's why we got fathers, mothers and young people, male and female."

"Sucker Punch," from director Zack Snyder ("300," "Watchmen"), follows the adventures of a group of young women (Emily Browning, Abbie Cornish and Vanessa Hudgens among them) who escape a mental hospital into a fantasy realm of dragon slaying, samurai combat and battles with zombie soldiers.

While the "Wimpy Kid" sequel and "Sucker Punch" combined to deliver more than $40 million in revenue, Hollywood's long box-office dry spell continued.

Overall business totaled $120 million, down 7 percent from the same weekend last year, when "How to Train Your Dragon" debuted at No. 1 with $43.7 million, according to box-office tracker Hollywood.com.

Domestic revenues this year are dragging at $2.2 billion, a 19 percent drop from 2010, whose first quarter was unusually strong because of big business from 2009 holdover "Avatar" and a few other hits.

Business was so-so for the rest of 2010, with movie-ticket sales sagging during the summer and holidays, the two periods that account for about 60 percent of Hollywood's annual theatrical revenue.

Hollywood.com analyst Paul Dergarabedian said he expects the opposite to occur this year. He predicts Hollywood will have a strong summer that will offset this year's weak start, with studios potentially rebounding to haul in record revenue for the year.

"This is a big downturn, but I think summer is on the way to save the day with some really big titles," Dergarabedian said. "I'll take a strong summer and fall and holiday over a strong first quarter any day."

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Hollywood.com. Final figures will be released Monday.

1. **"Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules,"** $24.4 million.
2. **"Sucker Punch,"** $19 million.
3. **"Limitless,"** $15.2 million.
4. **"The Lincoln Lawyer,"** $11 million.
5. **"Rango,"** $9.8 million.
6. **"Battle: Los Angeles,"** $7.6 million.
7. **"Paul,"** $7.5 million.
8. **"Red Riding Hood,"** $4.3 million.
9. **"The Adjustment Bureau,"** $4.2 million.
10. **"Mars Needs Moms!"**, $2.2 million.

Witherspoon

Witherspoon weds agent beau in California

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Reese Witherspoon has walked down the aisle. A spokeswoman for the actress says the "Walk the Line" star wed her fiance, Hollywood agent Jim Toth, in Ojai, Calif., about 90 miles north of Los Angeles. Publicist Nicole Perna did not reveal details about the Saturday ceremony.

Usmagazine.com first reported the nuptials.

The Oscar-winning actress and Toth announced their engagement in December.

Toth is an agent for Creative Artists Agency, which represents Witherspoon through another agent.

The 35-year-old actress won an Academy Award for her portrayal of June Carter in 2005's "Walk the Line." Witherspoon's other film credits include "Legally Blonde," "Four Christmases" and the forthcoming "Water for Elephants."

She was previously married to actor Ryan Phillippe, with whom she has two children: 11-year-old daughter Ava and 7-year-old son Deacon.

Plan scrapped for a 3-D camera on next Mars rover

PASADENA, California (AP)—A high-resolution 3-D camera that "Avatar" director James Cameron was helping to build for NASA's next Mars rover won't fly after all.

NASA on Friday said work on the zoom camera was halted because there wasn't enough time to thoroughly test it before launch.

Cameron last year lobbied NASA to revive a plan to give rover Curiosity a better set of eyes and worked with engineers to build it.

Project scientist John Grotzinger said Curiosity's current camera is powerful enough to meet mission goals.

In a statement released by NASA, Cameron said he's confident future missions will benefit from the work he and others invested even if Curiosity won't.

The $2.5 billion Curiosity is scheduled to launch later this year and land on Mars in August 2012.

Prince Harry to go on Arctic trek with war vets

LONDON (AP)—Prince Harry is heading to the Arctic, showing his support for Britain's wounded Afghanistan war veterans by joining part of their punishing expedition to the North Pole.

Harry travels to frigid northern Norway on Tuesday for three days of training and five days of trekking on a trip organized by the Walking With the Wounded charity, of which he is a patron.

The group includes four British soldiers who were seriously wounded while on active duty, including two amputees.

"What the Walking With The Wounded North Pole Team is undertaking is an enormous adventure of the most challenging order," Harry said in a statement Friday.

The charity hopes to raise 2 million pounds ($3.2 million) through donations and sponsorships for the expedition. Harry said he hopes the money "will make a life-changing difference to injured servicemen and women from our Armed Forces."

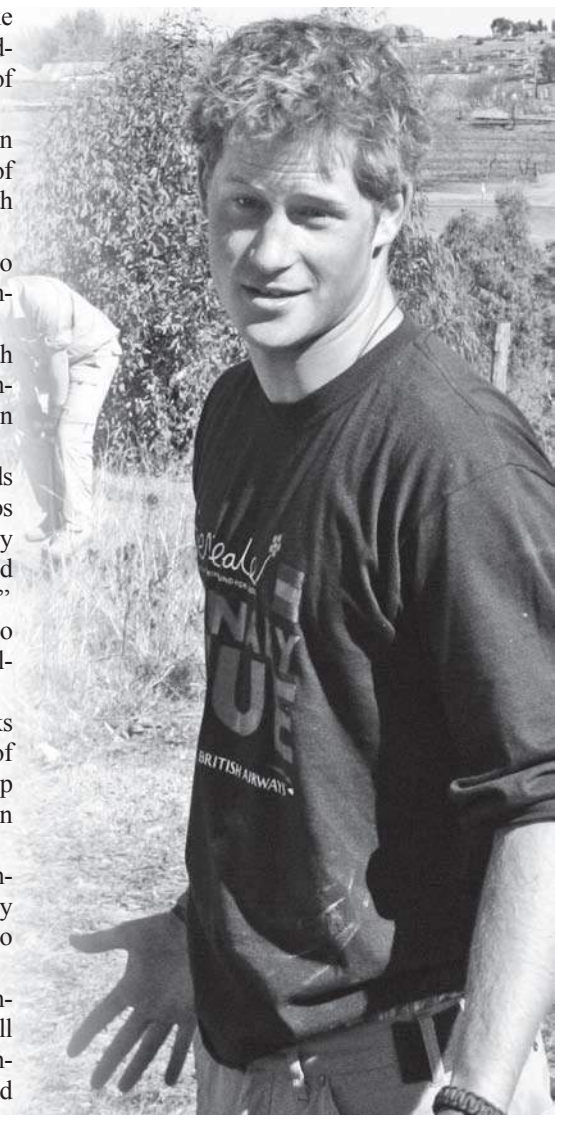
The four wounded men will be joined by two expedition leaders and a Norwegian guide familiar with the region.

The expedition is expected to take four weeks and cover roughly 200 miles (320 kilometers) of frozen Arctic Ocean territory by foot. The group will be pulling their own equipment in sleds in temperatures expected to drop far below zero.

The wounded men making the trip are Afghanistan veterans Capt. Martin Hewitt, 30, Capt. Guy Disney, 28, Sgt. Steve Young, 28, and Pvt. Jaco Van Gass, 24.

"Through this expedition, we aim to demonstrate to injured servicemen and women of all ranks that you can achieve great things post-injury," Hewitt said. "Our training is complete and now it's time to freeze."

Harry plans to leave the group April 5 to resume his military training and to serve as the best man at his brother Prince William's April 29 wedding.



AP

Britain's Prince Harry talks to journalists whilst his regiment helps out with the rebuilding of a school for disabled children in Batha-Bathe near Maseru, Lesotho, Tuesday, July 8, 2008.

Brando Skyhorse receives PEN/ Hemingway Award

BOSTON (AP)—Brando Skyhorse, author of "The Madonnas of Echo Park," has received the 2011 PEN/Hemingway Award for a distinguished first book of fiction.

The Mexican-American writer from California accepted the award Sunday at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in Boston. Skyhorse's novel-in-stories covers the lives of Mexican Americans in a neighborhood northwest of downtown Los Angeles.

Patrick Hemingway, writer Ernest Hemingway's sole surviving son, and writer Marilynne Robinson presented the award, which is given for a novel or book of short stories by an American author who has not previously published a book of fiction.

The John F. Kennedy Library is the major repository of Ernest Hemingway's works.

Giant silk China scroll goes for $30 million plus

PARIS (AP)—A giant 18th-century Chinese silk scroll painting of a military troop review has been sold at auction for more than €22 million ($30.8 million), the highest auction price for a Chinese work in France.

The work, found in a Paris attic and sold in Toulouse by auctioneer Marc Labarbe, is one of a series of four works of 17th-century maneuvers that mobilized some 20,000 men.

A Hong Kong collector, who asked to remain anonymous, made the winning bid Saturday of €22,057,000 after a ferocious bidding war with seven others.

The 24-meter-long (78.7 feet) horizontal scroll was painted around 1748 under Emperor Qianlong.

One of the four scrolls is in the Palace Museum of Beijing, and another was auctioned off in 2008 at Sotheby's in Hong Kong—for $67.86 million.

AP

Visitors look on a Qianlong-dynasty painting, representing a military parade, at a action house in Toulouse, south-west of France, Wednesday, March 23, 2011.

Older worker's ill behavior could have multiple causes

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DearAbby

DEAR ABBY: My heart ached after reading the letter from "Stumped in California" (Feb. 4), who wondered what could be done about an older co-worker, "Anita," who she said was showing "signs of dementia." I would caution her about making judgments based on stereotypes of older workers and their health problems.

Like Anita, I am in my late 60s. I am also underwater in my mortgage, which means I have no nest egg. Because my husband is unemployed, my savings have been depleted. My short-term memory is poor, and the meds I am on to help me function do not improve my memory.

Anita may not have dementia. She may be suffering from unbearable worry and stress. I suggest putting out a hand in friendship to Anita instead of trying to diagnose her.

FEELING IT TOO IN RICHMOND, VA.

DEAR FEELING IT: Many of my readers felt this one, and wrote to offer compassion to Anita as well as possible explanations for her slip in job performance. Read on:

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Anyone experiencing marked and/or prolonged changes in mood, function and behavior should undergo thorough medical and/or psychological/psychiatric evaluation. Many treatable conditions can affect memory and concentration. The constant tearfulness observed by "Stumped" is a common symptom of depression.

If Anita's office has an Employee Assistance Plan, a supervisor or HR will know the procedure for referring her to an EAP clinician who can evaluate her and make recommendations for treatment, work-related considerations and follow-up.

LICENSED CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST, UPSTATE NEW YORK

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I am a state-licensed hearing instrument specialist. The commonalities between the symptoms of hearing loss and dementia are many. A person with hearing loss has a tendency to withdraw—she's more APART FROM than a PART OF. Also, if she's having trouble remembering things she's done before, she may not have heard the request. (How can you remember something if you have never heard it?)

I encourage "Stumped" to talk to Anita about having her hearing tested. A hearing aid may be what she needs to help her perform better on the job.

KNOWS FROM EXPERIENCE

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: As a manager in the federal government, I had an employee who worked hard the majority of her life and did a great job. Suddenly, her performance began suffering. It didn't make sense to me how she could be so valuable at one point in her career, and then couldn't do the simplest task without goofing it up.

I sent her to a doctor for an examination, and we discovered that this "older woman" was having mini-strokes all day long! I was relieved to be able to retire her on disability, rather than destroying her life's hard work by firing her. And she was able to get help for a medical condition she wasn't aware of.

RUTH IN FREDERICK, MD.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Anita may have a thyroid problem. I had similar symptoms in my 40s, and it took two years for the right diagnosis. A blood test is all she would need to find out.

HELPING HAND IN ORLAND HILLS, ILL.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I am 67 and work because I can't live on Social Security. Perhaps Anita is facing the same problem and must work. My co-workers are supportive, and we have access to a wellness program to help us. She should check with Human Resources. Anita needs support, not criticism. Do not assume all seniors suffer from dementia.

SEASONED WORKER IN TUCSON

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Technology is moving so quickly that people of all ages need to update their skill level constantly. The economy is hitting our seniors hard. Anita may be working to pay for medications. To "Stumped" I say: Get off your high horse and stop watching Anita "deteriorate." Help her! It might be you someday.

P.J. IN MIAMISBURG, OHIO

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

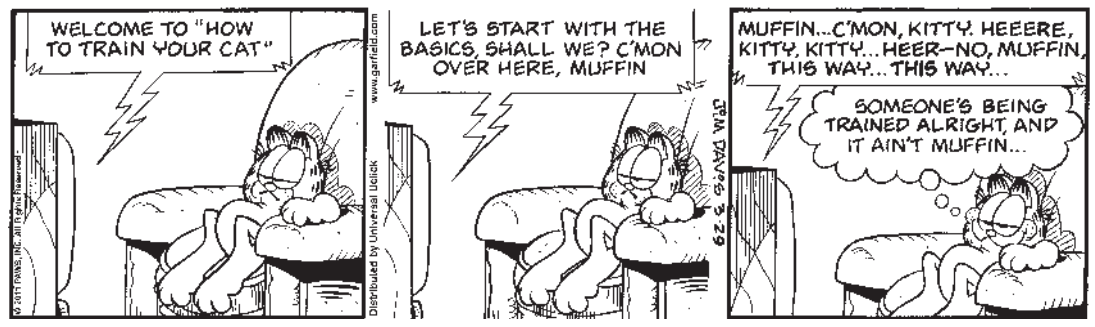
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

HELLO, MAY I CARRY YOUR BOOKS FOR YOU?
WHY? SO YOU CAN THROW THEM IN A PUDDLE OR SOMETHING? FORGET IT!
I WOULDN'T DO THAT!
YEAH, YOU'D PROBABLY DO SOMETHING WORSE! YOU'RE NOT TOUCHING MY BOOKS, CALVIN!
STRICTLY SPEAKING, I'M NOT CALVIN. I'M THE PHYSICAL MANIFESTATION OF CALVIN'S GOOD SIDE.
IF THAT WAS TRUE, YOU'D BE A LOT SMALLER.
BOY, HAVE I HEARD THAT JOKE A LOT.
AND IF YOU THINK YOU CAN GET MY BOOKS BY ACTING EVEN WEIRDER THAN USUAL, THINK AGAIN!

Garfield®

By Jim Davis


WELCOME TO "HOW TO TRAIN YOUR CAT"
LET'S START WITH THE BASICS, SHALL WE? C'MON OVER HERE, MUFFIN
MUFFIN...C'MON, KITTY. HEEERE, KITTY, KITTY...HEER—NO, MUFFIN, THIS WAY...THIS WAY...
SOMEONE'S BEING TRAINED ALRIGHT, AND IT AIN'T MUFFIN...
JIM DAVIS 3-29

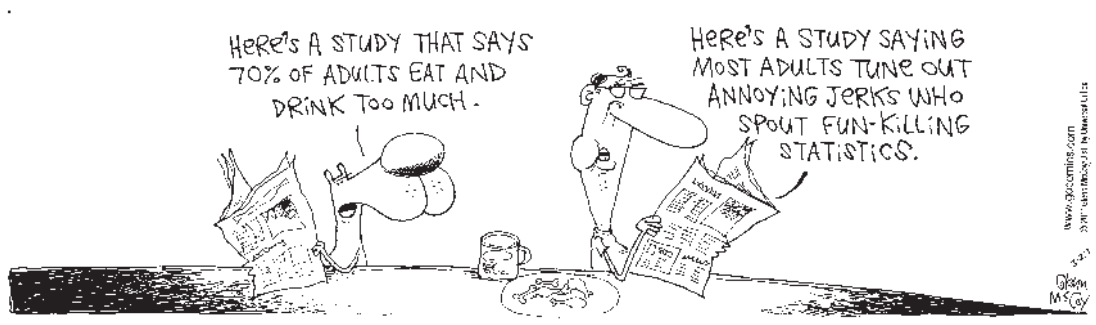
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

HONEY, I'M GOING TO GET A CUP OF COFFEE.
OKAY, CAN YOU PICK UP A GALLON OF MILK?
BUT, HONEY! I WAS GONNA SIT AROUND AND TELL STORIES THAT NEVER ACTUALLY HAPPENED.
CAN'T YOU COME BACK AND TELL THEM TO CLAYTON?
THAT'S NO FUN. HE CHECKS MY FACTS ON WIKIPEDIA.
HMM. I'VE TOLD HIM MULTIPLE TIMES NOT TO RELY ON WIKIPEDIA AS HIS PRIMARY SOURCE.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


HERE'S A STUDY THAT SAYS 70% OF ADULTS EAT AND DRINK TOO MUCH.
HERE'S A STUDY SAYING MOST ADULTS TUNE OUT ANNOYING JERKS WHO SPOUT FUN-KILLING STATISTICS.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

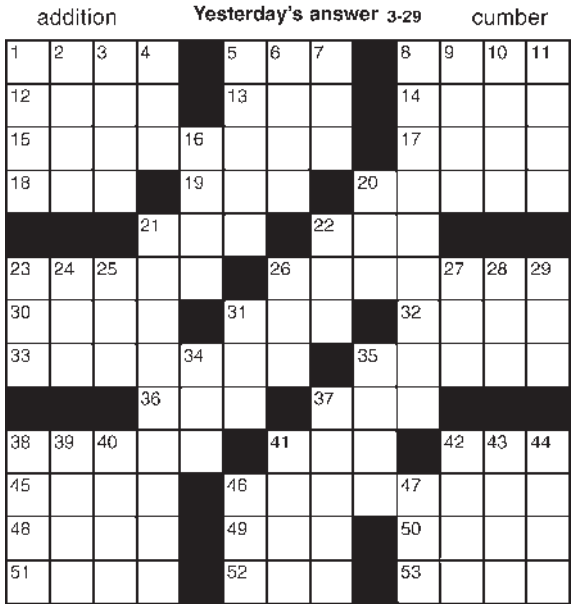
ACROSS
1 Mustard containers
5 Lustrous black
8 Spill the beans
12 "American —"
13 Ordinal ending
14 Corporate symbol
15 Eye shade
17 Second-hand
18 Before
19 Clay, today
20 Poor
21 Street address?
22 Unruly bunch
23 Posts
26 Boris of old horror movies
30 Additionally
31 Repair
32 Verbal
33 Account addition
35 Hackneyed
36 Pooch
37 Massachusetts cape
38 Talkative
41 Stickum
42 Vast expanse
45 Old Italian money
46 Wad
48 Valhalla VIP
49 Moreover
50 Capri, e.g.
51 Seven days
52 Past
53 Measure of meds

DOWN
1 Agree
2 Hebrew month
3 Judicial garb
4 Crafty
5 Wobbly dessert
6 Needle case
7 Definite article
8 Aristocrat
9 Come in last
10 On in years
11 Corpse
16 Taverns
20 Neither partner
21 Red Cross repository
22 CONTROL Agent 86
23 Frenzied
24 Hearty brew
25 NetZero, for ex.
26 DIY buy
27 Bobby of hockey
28 Enthusiast
29 Soar
31 Newton fruit
34 Sauce source
35 Prepare food
37 Timeshare unit
38 Glisten
39 Staffer
40 Soft cheese
41 Group of hoodlums
42 Mediocre
43 Right angles
44 Sheltered
46 Sheep's call
47 Disencumber

Solution time: 21 mins.

A	W	I			O	W	I		P	O	P	F
C	H	A	P		P	H	I		A	V	O	W
T	A	I	L		T	I	L		C	A	P	E
S	T	R	A	P		G	A	W	K			
			Y	A	M		C	H	E	E	S	E
J	A	V	E	L	I	N		O	D	D	L	Y
I	C	E	D		D	A	B		A	G	U	E
V	E	N	A	L		G	O	M	P	E	R	S
E	S	T	H	E	R		Y	O	U			
			U	T	A	H		E	N	T	R	Y
I	V	A	N		P	I	N		C	H	O	U
D	I	S	C		I	R	E		H	U	L	A
A	N	K	H		D	E	W		D	E	N	

Yesterday's answer 3-29



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18– only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Jennifer Capriati, 35; Amy Sedaris, 50; Annabella Sciorra, 51; Bud Cort, 63

Happy Birthday: You've got your finger on the pulse, you'll be where the action is and there will be no stopping you from moving forward this year. Your confidence will grow and your ability to do what you say will impress those watching. Change is heading your way, so relish the opportunities that develop. Your numbers are 6, 8, 11, 24, 27, 33, 41

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): You can make moves, contact influential people and drum up the support you need to move forward with your plans. A positive attitude, coupled with discipline and hard work will be difficult for any competition to beat. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Don't be fooled by what's not being said. You have to read between the lines if you expect to make the right choice. Don't let your emotions take over, especially where personal or professional matters are concerned. ✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Refuse to let your personal opinion interfere with a job that requires you to be totally objective. A personal relationship has the potential to cost you professionally if you give in to the demands being made. Focus on how you can get ahead financially. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): You can expect to face opposition and competition professionally. However, if you are swift to develop your special skills in some small way, it will be difficult for the competition to surpass you. Simplicity and moderation are the keys. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Your charming, outgoing presentation will grab the attention of someone who can make your life easier and your pocketbook grow. Make sure to get everything in writing. Plan a little celebration for the evening hours. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Put greater emphasis on your relationships and your future. Take care of personal changes that will give you greater appeal. Don't spend money impulsively in order to win someone's favor. Incorporate a creative idea into a project and excel. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Rethink your current personal position and weed through your emotions. Once you have deciphered what's actually going on between you and a friend, lover or a family member, you will be able to put any obstacles you face behind you. ✪✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Look at everything on your to-do list and prioritize. Knowing what to focus on will lead to your success. Your energy is high and mustn't be wasted on trivial pastimes. Love is in the stars. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Keep busy and you'll avoid a clash with someone who can make your life miserable. You have to remain cutting-edge if you want to stay in the game. Ask for help or attend a seminar that will keep you up to speed. ✪✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Don't take on responsibilities that don't belong to you. It's vital that you have time for the projects that will bring you the highest return. Love is looking favorable, so socialize if you are single or have a romantic evening with your current partner. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): You've got a lot more going for you than you realize. Good fortune awaits -ñ all you have to do is forge ahead in the direction that beckons you the most. Turn something you enjoy doing into a sideline business. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Don't be afraid to put a little aggression behind your feelings, especially when dealing with a project you want to pursue. You can convince whoever is in charge to give you a chance. A love interest may throw you off your game. Don't let business and pleasure cause a conflict. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You have charm and charisma and are responsible and aggressive. You face opposition head on.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

2				4		7		
			1		9	6	3	
			3				9	4
	5	1					4	
9				3				8
	6					1	7	
4	3				5			
	7	8	4		2			
		9		8				1

Difficulty Level ★★ 3/29

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

1	4	5	8	2	9	3	7	6
8	9	7	5	3	6	4	1	2
6	2	3	4	7	1	8	5	9
2	5	4	1	6	8	7	9	3
7	8	9	2	4	3	5	6	1
3	6	1	9	5	7	2	4	8
4	7	6	3	9	2	1	8	5
9	3	8	7	1	5	6	2	4
5	1	2	6	8	4	9	3	7

Difficulty Level ★ 3/29

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

JOSH GROBAN — **Solution: 10 letters**

E	N	R	I	Q	U	E	N	H	Y	E	L	D	E	M
C	M	A	T	H	I	E	U	A	(D)	A	M	S	M	O
N	L	M	I	D	A	O	R	R	(I)	E	V	I	L	D
I	U	O	Y	L	A	A	I	P	(S)	R	R	N	E	A
R	L	S	S	R	L	N	T	O	(C)	E	B	L	L	T
P	L	T	R	E	R	U	U	E	I	T	G	L	O	R
O	A	E	O	K	R	A	M	L	E	N	A	W	N	U
R	B	N	S	A	R	S	L	I	A	W	U	O	D	F
T	Y	V	E	W	I	E	M	P	N	L	T	H	O	E
U	O	A	E	A	Z	J	S	R	L	A	B	S	N	E
G	R	S	D	N	O	B	O	W	L	A	T	U	N	L
U	T	U	E	R	U	C	P	A	C	E	N	I	M	L
E	J	M	D	N	A	S	I	E	R	T	S	T	O	E
S	K	I	M	M	E	L	A	W	S	Y	L	L	E	N
E	N	T	E	R	A	N	I	D	I	S	S	A	G	A

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Yesterday's Answer: Goal

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First Four to Final Four: VCU stuns Kansas

SAN ANTONIO (AP)—Move over, Butler. Virginia Commonwealth is crashing the Final Four.

Two weeks ago, the 11th-seeded Rams so doubted they would get a NCAA tournament invite that they watched Cartoon Network and went out for burgers instead of watching the selection show. Now, all of America will be watching them in the Final Four.

The 11th-seeded Rams are heading to Houston, and final No. 1 seed Kansas is heading home after the biggest March upset in years.

VCU stunned the Jayhawks 71-61 on Sunday, becoming just the third 11th seed to make the Final Four. The Jayhawks had been the last top seed standing, but what looked like an easy path to the final weekend ended in a stunning collapse.

Eighth-seeded Butler, you're promoted to a favorite next week. VCU is the trendy underdog pick this year.

"Once again we felt like nobody really thought we could win going into this game," said VCU coach Shaka Smart, the budding star of the tournament. "Our guys have done a phenomenal job of putting all the doubters aside, all the people that didn't believe in us, and going out to do their job."

VCU guard Joey Rodriguez counted one of Kansas' vaunted Morris twins—Marcus or Markieff—as one of those many doubters. During a pregame captains meeting with officials, Rodriguez said one of the brothers offered him some parting words: "The run ends here."

"We'll see," Rodriguez shot back.

The Jayhawks saw all right.

VCU players, hoisting their Southwest regional champion trophy, poured into the temporary bleachers where VCU's widely outnumbered fans sat in an Alamodome that was otherwise colored in Kansas blue and white.

AP

In this photo provided by Virginia Commonwealth, VCU raises the Southwest regional trophy after the finals of the NCAA college basketball game against Kansas, Sunday, March 27, 2011, in San Antonio.

VCU had sold out its allotment of 1,000 tickets in San Antonio after advancing farther than any Rams team in school history. The weekend before in Chicago, VCU had so many leftovers that Purdue fans scooped them up.

Jamie Skeen led VCU with 26 points, and as the final seconds ticked down, heaved the ball from the free throw line into the stands behind the opposite backboard. His teammates on the bench, who spent the final minutes with locked arms to hold each other back, finally spilled out onto the court, grinning ear to ear.

Kansas players walked slowly off the court. Several, including Markieff Morris, cried.

"Probably the best game they played ever," Markieff said. "Probably the best game ever as a school tonight. We let them. We let them beat us."

Smart was guided from one interview to another wearing the cut-down net around his neck. The cheers for VCU were only interrupted for guard Brandon Rozzell, who stood at midcourt as the crown serenaded him with an impromptu "Happy Birthday."

The celebration even carried to other arenas. In Newark, N.J., where Kentucky was playing North Carolina, the crowd erupted when the public address announcer broadcast the final score from Texas.

"Anything is possible," he told the arena.

It's George Mason all over again, and VCU had an even tougher Final Four path than their tiny conference brethren in 2006.

The Rams needed five wins to go from First Four to Final Four. Along the way, they toppled the Pac-10's Southern California, the Big East's Georgetown, the Big 10's Purdue, the ACC's Florida State and now the Big 12's Kansas.

They'll pick on someone their own size next: Butler.

The Jayhawks? All they did was bully smaller teams to get this far. Kansas never apologized for coasting through a favorable bracket that served up schools seeded 16th (Boston University), ninth (Illinois) and 12th (Richmond).

None of those games tested the Jayhawks, who had been ranked No. 1 this season and had won 11 in row. Then VCU came out and showed it wasn't just another pushover.

The Jayhawks spent the first half not knowing what hit them.

Kansas (36-3) hadn't trailed by more than two points the entire tournament. With five minutes left in the first half, the Jayhawks trailed by 17.

Marcus Morris had 20 points and 16 rebounds, and his brother had 13 and 12. They played in disbelief as VCU, which ousted Florida State on 3-pointers on Friday night, used the long ball to bury the Jayhawks early this time.

The Rams hit 9 of their 12 3-pointers in the first half. Kansas trailed 41-27 at halftime and closed the lead to 46-44 with 13:11 left, but a 10-2 VCU run put the Jayhawks right back where they started.

Smart, the 33-year-old whose enigmatic personality has made him a breakout star, was so animated shuffling in front of his bench that officials shooed him back. Another official later served Smart his first technical all season.

Smart said he used that moment as a motivator—though he had to clean up his language first.

"It was basically forget the refs, forget Kansas, this is all about us," Smart said. "We got to do what we got to do."

VCU (28-11) is the third 11th seed to crack the Final Four. The last was George Mason in 2006, when that Colonial Athletic Association school stunned Connecticut in its regional final. LSU made it in 1986.

The Rams' upset guaranteed a Final Four without a No. 1 seed.

Ohio State, Pittsburgh and Duke didn't even last to the regional finals. Two traditional basketball powers, Arizona and Kentucky, and defending runner-up Butler took care of that.

On Saturday, Smart quoted a line from "Dumb and Dumber" to explain how he felt about his team: "So you're saying we've got a chance?" A day later, he leaned on another old comedy to sum up the Ram's unlikely run.

"Ever seen the movie 'Major League?'" Skeen told reporters. "I can't say exactly what the guy says. But they get in some situations, and there's only one thing left to do.

"Win the whole blank thing."

Kentucky beats North Carolina in East final

NEWARK, N.J. (AP)—Kentucky spent 13 straight springs watching other schools play in the Final Four, a destination college basketball's winningest program considers its birthright.

At most places, that's hardly a drought.

In the Bluegrass, it's a lifetime.

Now coach John Calipari and the Wildcats are two wins away from a national title. Finally.

Brandon Knight scored 22 points and fourth-seeded Kentucky advanced to the Final Four for the first time since their 1998 national title with a 76-69 win over second-seeded North Carolina on Sunday in the East Regional final.

"We got Kentucky back," senior center Josh Harrellson said. "A lot of people doubted us. A lot of people really didn't think we'd be the team we are. We really pulled it together as a team, and we're back now."

The Wildcats (29-8) will play Connecticut in Houston on Saturday night after turning back a late surge by the Tar Heels (27-10), who erased an 11-point deficit before running out of gas in the final 2 minutes.

DeAndre Liggins added 12 points for Kentucky, including a 3-pointer from the corner with 37 seconds remaining to help lift the Wildcats.

A season after falling a game short of the Final Four behind a roster filled with future NBA stars, the Wildcats are heading to the national semifinals for the 14th time behind Knight's heady play and Calipari's relentless energy.

He revitalized the flagging program a year ago behind superstar John Wall. In Calipari's second season, he delivered on his promise to return Kentucky to glory.

Even if the guy who hired him wasn't sure this would be the year Kentucky would end its 13-year drought between Final Fours.

"I thought he was building toward it, but I didn't think this was the year," Kentucky president Lee Todd said.

It didn't look like it in January, when the Wildcats couldn't win a close game. It didn't look like it in February, when they couldn't win on the road.

Calipari admitted it didn't look that way two weeks ago, when his team was relegated to a fourth-seed despite convincingly winning the Southeastern Conference tournament. The powers that be put Kentucky in the same bracket as top overall seed Ohio State.

"I just thought the path to get here would be so ridiculous," Calipari said, "that we would have to play out of our minds or people would have to get knocked off."

Done and done.

Kentucky edged Ohio State on Friday, then gave the Final Four another blueblood program, though with a twist. There will be no No. 1 or No. 2 seeds playing the last weekend of the season since 1979, well before the field expanded to 64 teams in 1985.

The Wildcats have a pedigree and a roster full of highly touted freshmen. Yet they're just as reliant on holdovers such as Liggins and Harrellson.

A seldom used reserve a year ago who has flourished in his final season, Harrellson again held his own against North Carolina's bigger, more heralded front line, scoring 12 points and grabbing eight rebounds as Kentucky avenged a 75-73 loss to the Tar Heels in December in Chapel Hill.

It was a different story in New Jersey. And in March.

It's a month Kentucky and North Carolina have owned for years. They've combined for 210 NCAA tournament victories—105 each—but Sunday's victory was the Wildcats' first in three NCAA meetings with the Tar Heels.

Not that North Carolina coach Roy Williams was in the mood for a history lesson.

"I'm going to focus on what a wonderful group of kids and what a wonderful year it was," he said. "But it still doesn't take away the hurt that you feel today."

Tyler Zeller led the Tar Heels with 21 points and nine rebounds and Harrison Barnes added 18 points, but North Carolina fell behind early and struggled to keep the hot-shooting Wildcats in check.

"No question, I thought we were going to pull it out," Barnes said. "We've been through so many of these situations before. Losing didn't enter my mind until the final horn sounded."

Instead, it was Harrellson giving teammate Eloy Vargas a bear hug and Knight flexing at midcourt before gleefully cutting down the nets while Barnes and the Tar Heels trudged slowly off the floor.

It's a scene Kentucky has longed for—a mission that began in earnest when the program lured John Calipari away from Memphis in 2009.

He promised he wasn't "the grand poobah" the day he signed his eight-year, $31.65 million contract, but there's little doubt who rules the Bluegrass now.

"You play at Kentucky to raise banners, and I'm happy we did this," said Kentucky athletic director Mitch Barnhart. "I'm happy for these guys, because no one gave them a chance."

Calipari joins Rick Pitino as the only men's basketball coaches to lead three different programs to the Final Four. Calipari's previous visits at Massachusetts in 1996 and Memphis in 2008 were vacated by the NCAA for rules violations, but Calipari was not found liable in either instance.

Barnhart said Calipari wanted his Final Four appearances with the Wildcats "to stick." Time will tell, though he's already restored the luster to a program that's slowly slipped off its perch over the last decade.

That lust for a championship banner is why Kentucky went after Calipari so aggressively, making him the highest paid coach in the country.

Heat have 3 reach 30 in win over Rockets

MIAMI (AP)—With the playoffs looming, LeBron James, Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh are finding a new gear.

And they accomplished something Sunday that hadn't been done in more than 50 years.

Each of them had 30-10 nights—James with 33 points and 10 rebounds, Bosh had 31 points and 12 rebounds, and Wade shook off a bruised tailbone to finish with 30 points and 11 boards—as the Miami Heat beat the Houston Rockets 125-119 for their eighth win in nine games.

It was the first time since February 1961 that three teammates finished with at least 30 points and 10 rebounds in a non-overtime game.

"Unbelievable," James said.

"That's why we get paid the big bucks," Wade said.

The last time a team had three players score 30 in the same game was Feb. 26, 2010, when Houston had Martin, Aaron Brooks and Scola combine for 94 against San Antonio. Before that, you'd have to go back all the way to Nov. 14, 1997, when Portland's Isaiah Rider, Brian Grant and Arvydas Sabonis all had 30-plus points and 10 or more rebounds in a quadruple-overtime win over Phoenix.

But doing it in regulation, the last time that happened was a half-century ago, when Oscar Robertson, Jack Twyman and Wayne Embry—Hall of Famers all—did it for the Cincinnati Royals in a loss to the Philadelphia Warriors.

"One of the things we talked about when we came together was making history," Bosh said.

Mike Bibby added 14 points for the Heat, who beat Houston by the same score on Dec. 29.

Kevin Martin scored 29 points, Luis Scola added 28 and Kyle Lowry—who tweaked an ankle late—had 25 points, nine assists and seven rebounds for the Rockets. Chase Budinger scored 16 for Houston, which had a five-game winning streak snapped.

Grizzlies 111, Spurs 104

In Memphis, Tennessee, The Memphis Grizzlies strengthened their grip on an NBA playoff spot with a win over the San Antonio Spurs in what could be a precursor to a possible postseason matchup.

Tony Allen and Zach Randolph had 23 points apiece for Memphis, which currently holds the eighth and final playoff spot in the Western Conference. If the Grizzlies earn the No. 8 seed, they will likely face the NBA-leading Spurs in the opening round of the playoffs.

George Hill matched his career high with 30 points on 9-of-12 shooting for the Spurs, who slumped to a third straight loss.

Lakers 102, Hornets 84

In Los Angeles, Los Angeles inched closer to the top of the overall NBA standings with a comfortable win over New Orleans.

Kobe Bryant scored 30 points and Pau Gasol had 23 points and 16 rebounds as the Lakers made it 15 wins from 16 games.

The two-time defending NBA champions jumped to an 18-point lead in the first half and weathered the Hornets' fourth-quarter rally to sweep the four-game season series with a possible first-round playoff opponent.

Carl Landry had a season-high 24 points and 10 rebounds in New Orleans' second game without injured scoring leader David West.

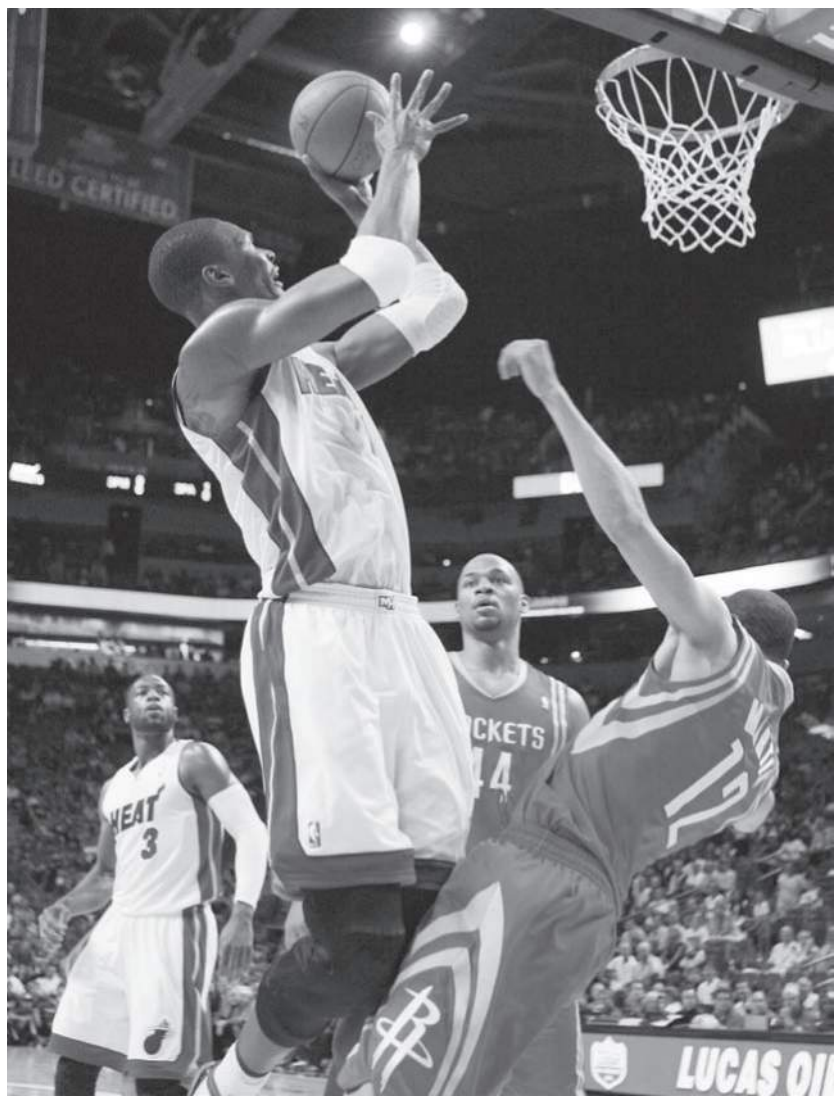
Thunder 99, Trail Blazers 90

In Oklahoma City, the hosts secured their second straight playoff berth by defeating Portland.

Russell Westbrook hit three late 3-pointers, including the clincher with 21 seconds left which put the Thunder up 97-90.

Gerald Wallace, who scored 40 points, missed at the other end and the Thunder was able to celebrate another postseason berth.

Wallace was unguardable at times in the second half as he carried the Trail Blazers back from a 14-point halftime deficit. His total, on 16-of-28 shooting, was a season high and just two points shy of his career best.



AP

Miami Heat's Chris Bosh, center, shoots as Houston Rockets' Kevin Martin (12) defends and Rockets' Chuck Hayes (44) looks on during the second quarter of an NBA basketball game in Miami, Sunday, March 27, 2011.

Westbrook scored 28 and Kevin Durant finished with 21 for Oklahoma City.

Mavericks 91, Suns 83

In Phoenix, Dallas pulled out a victory over Phoenix that may have dropped the curtains on the Suns' hopes for a playoff berth.

Phoenix led most of the ugly game and it was tied at 83 with 1:37 to play. Jason Kidd sank a 3-pointer one from long range with 1:11 to go to make it 86-83 to the Mavericks. Channing Frye, scoreless and 0 for 4 shooting, inexplicably forced a 3-point airball at the other end and Kidd responded with another 3 that put Dallas ahead 89-83 with 44 seconds to go.

Marcin Gortat had 20 points and 15 rebounds for Phoenix.

Dallas won its fourth straight and improved to 12-1 against the Pacific Division. Phoenix dropped to 36-36, four games behind Memphis for the eighth and final playoff spot in the West with 10 games to play.

Celtics 85, Timberwolves 82

In Minneapolis, Boston nearly gave away another huge lead in a victory over Minnesota.

Paul Pierce had 23 points and seven rebounds and Kevin Garnett—against his old side—had 13 points and 13 rebounds for the Celtics, who led by 25 early in the second quarter, but trailed by two midway through the fourth.

Michael Beasley had 28 points and 10 rebounds for the Timberwolves, who were missing All-Star Kevin Love for the third straight game because of a groin strain.

Kings 114, 76ers 111, OT

In Philadelphia, Marcus Thornton scored 32 points and former Philadelphia center Samuel Dalembert made two free throws in the closing seconds of overtime to lift Sacramento over Philadelphia.

Beno Udrih made a big 3-pointer in the closing minutes, too, and the Kings won their third straight.

The Sixers were led by Jrue Holiday's 28 points as they missed a good chance to keep up with fifth-placed Atlanta.

Hawks 99, Cavaliers 83

In Cleveland, Marvin Williams scored a season-high 31 points to help Atlanta beat Cleveland.

Al Horford added 20 for the Hawks, who were without leading scorer Joe Johnson, but never trailed against the league's worst team.

Williams took advantage of his increased playing time by shooting 9 of 14 from the field, including three 3-pointers, and 8 of 9 from the foul line in 43 minutes.

Baron Davis, who is expected to move into Cleveland's starting lineup soon, came off the bench and scored 19 points.

Warriors 114, Wizards 104

In Oakland, Monta Ellis had 37 points and 13 assists, leading Golden State past road-weary Washington.

Ellis played the entire game and added seven rebounds, and David Lee had a season-high 33 points for the Warriors.

JaVale McGee had a career-high 28 points and tied his career best with 18 rebounds for the Wizards, who have a 1-35 record on the road this season.

Laird survives early collapse to win Bay Hill

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—All that stood between Martin Laird and victory at Bay Hill were two putts from just inside 90 feet on the 18th hole, which didn't seem all that long considering what he already had been through Sunday.

First came a stunning collapse that took him from a three-shot lead to a three-shot deficit in a span of seven holes. He was three shots behind when he walked off the 14th green, two shots ahead as he headed to the 17th tee.

Laird knocked the first putt up to 3 1/2 feet, then jabbed his fist when he rolled in the par putt to win the Arnold Palmer Invitational.

"That was a hell of a day," Laird said. "That was a tough fight out there. It was a battle out there, but you know, it makes it even sweeter at the end when I got this trophy."

In the toughest final round on the PGA Tour this year, Laird was strong at the end with two birdies and two clutch pars to close with a 3-over 75, the highest final round by a winner in the 33-year history at Bay Hill.

That two-putt par on the 18th was just enough for a one-shot victory over hard-luck Steve Marino, who lost three shots on two plugged lies in bunkers over the last four holes. Marino followed a double bogey on the par-3 17th with an all-or-nothing shot over the water at the flag to 8 feet on the last hole for birdie and a 72.

"You just cannot afford to (waste) shots in the final round—really, at any point in the tournament—if you want to win," Marino said after his third close call this year. "Unfortunately on 17, that's exactly what I did. It came back to bite me."

Laird, a 28-year-old from Scotland who came to America to play college golf and never left, became the first European to win at Bay Hill. He now heads off to the Masters for the first major of the year, having felt like he just won one.

Considering all the calamity, it felt as though the U.S. Open have moved from June to March. No one in the last three groups broke par, and those six players were a combined 19-over par.

It was a day of survival.

For Laird, it turned out to be a remarkable revival.

When he pulled his approach from a fairway bunker into the water on No. 11 and made double bogey, he already was 5 over for the round. But while he lost the lead, he never lost hope.

"I never thought about not winning," Laird said. "When I saw I was three down, I didn't have a choice. I had to start playing some good golf. I had to make birdies. Steve was playing too good. That was really the focus. It was trying to get this trophy."

First came a handshake and congratulations from Palmer, the tournament host.

"It really doesn't get any better than to meet him coming off as the champion of his tournament," Laird said.

Laird needed some help from Marino, who played beautifully until the last four holes.

Marino went at the flag on the 15th, tucked right behind the bunker, and his ball plugged in the soft sand. He blasted out to 35 feet and made bogey. Then came the 17th, and a 6-iron that he thought was good all the way until the crowd groaned.

He blasted out over the green, putted up the slope to 5 feet and missed the bogey putt.

"I played so well all day, and you know, one hiccup on 17 cost me the tournament," he said.

Justin Rose closed with a 68 and tied for third with David Toms and Marc Leishman, who needed to win to get into the Masters.

Tiger Woods, a six-time winner at Bay Hill, was poised for a second straight top 10 until he made bogey from the bunker on the 17th and hit his approach into the water on No. 18 for double bogey and a 72. In his final tournament before the Masters, Woods tied for 24th, seven shots behind. Phil Mickelson dropped three shots on the last five holes for a 73 to also finish in a tie for 24th.

Laird won for the second time in his PGA Tour career, and the record will show that he won for the first time in three tries when going into the final round atop the leaderboard.

But it wasn't that simple. Not even close.

Palmer prefers a stern test at his beloved Bay Hill, and that's what he got, especially in the afternoon when the wind picked up and the course dried out even more under a hot sun.

"The back-nine pins, they are all bogey and double-bogey pins—they are not birdie pins," Mickelson said when he finished. "The last eight holes are holes that you have to play 50 feet away if you're playing smart."

Laird finished at 8-under 280, the highest winning score since Ben Crenshaw shot 280 in 1993. Laird earned $1.08 million, and a validation after tough playoff losses at The Barclays and in Las Vegas late last year.

RACE

From Page 28

Padilla and Loken ahead, 40-30, and Loyola serving.

A re-start took place after Padilla was charged for hindering a play. Both the United States Tennis Association and International Tennis Federation' rules on game hindrance state that players can't talk when the ball is in play traveling toward their opponent. If talking interferes with opponents' ability to play the ball, the player loses the point. Players should avoid making loud noises or grunts that may bother opponents or players on adjacent courts. Under extreme circumstances, grunting can be treated as a hindrance and will result in loss of point. Both organizations also say the point shall be replayed if the player was hindered from playing the point through unintentional acts of opponents, or by something beyond the player's control.

When play resumed, Padilla and Loken got the needed point to force a deadlock, 2-all, as Loyola's return went wide to the backline. However, that was the closest Padilla and Loken could get, as they won only one game after the incident, while Race and Loyola regained their focus and went on to win the deciding set by three games.

"It was a tough game. Lope and Peter played a very good game, but we showed more consistency so we won. I was upset in the first set and I played bad. Then in the second and third sets, I started to calm down and focus on the match," Race said.

Before their title game against Loken and Padilla, Race and Loyola won against Bong Gamab and Dong Lacbayo on Saturday, 6-1, 6-3. Padilla and Loken defeated the same duo, 6-4, 6-3, to set up a finals match against Race and Loyola.

In other doubles results, the tandem of junior players Amami Sakano and Tommy Choi downed Eli Buenaventura and Roy Pangelinan in the 4.0 finals, 7-5, 6-2, while Carl Dela Cruz and Ernie Henzon prevailed over Feel Kalen and Joe Quitugua in the men's 3.0, 6-2, 6-4.

In the women's division, Tammy Ackerman and Joy Minor gained the 3.0 doubles crown against Vicky Izuka and May Ling Colombo, 6-3, 6-3. In the open division, junior players Thea Minor and Chloe Gadsden of Guam topped Lydia Tan and Vivian Lee, 6-2, 6-3.

MISO

From Page 28

Tournament yesterday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

The MISO boys maintained its early lead from the start to down Settsu Red Impulse, 71-61, in the first matchup, while the Settsu Red Impulse girls torched the Coalition Of Private School Sports Association girls all-stars, 101-41, in the second game.

Erick Dela Rosa helped the MISO boys build an early 18-12 lead in the first period with six markers.

Then Settsu Red Impulse trimmed a point off its deficit at halftime, 36-31. John Cenir chipped in with five points. Settsu Red Impulse's Hisataka Suda provided 17 points, but did not receive a lot of support from his teammates.

Late in the third, MISO's Ryan Ichihara took the floor and delivered a string of nine points that helped open up a double-digit margin, 55-44, heading into the last quarter.

From there, MISO executed solid defense and smart clock management as they cruised to an easy victory.

Cenir added seven more points in the clutch and was one of four MISO players to finish in double digits. MISO's Dela Rosa and Brandon Desebel combined for 29 in the game, while Settsu Red Impulse's Suda led all scorers with 28 in the loss.

The Settsu Red Impulse girls, for its part, got right to work and amassed a 24-6 lead in the first quarter against COPSSA.

Nanami Hashimoto and Aika Ueshima led the way with a combined 13 points in the period.

Settsu Red Impulse did not look back and limited COPSSA to just four points in the second period as they piled up a 62-10 lead; eight different players got in on the action.

Kaylani Lebria's six points was COPSSA's only flicker of offense in the first half.

Settsu Red Impulse called off the dogs after the break allowing COPSSA to keep pace with them in the third quarter, but the game was well out of hand by that point.

Seine Iwasaki kept it rolling for Settsu Red Impulse in the third with nine markers.

Settsu Red Impulse again backed off in the fourth, but still managed four 3-pointers as they spread the ball around to milk the clock.

It showed as the game progressed that Settsu Red Impulse was a team with sharpshooters who made COPSSA pay for every uncontested shot.

At times COPSSA displayed its power down low outwrestling the visitors for rebounds, but it did not matter because most of Settsu Red Impulse's shots simply found the bottom of the hoop.

Settsu Red Impulse's Kimi Oida led all scorers with 15, while Lebria turned in 14 on the short end.

Basketball Association of the Northern Mariana Islands organized the 2011 Settsu-Saipan Friendship Basketball Tournament for a third year in a row.

In related news, the COPSSA boys team was set to tip off against undefeated Kagman High School for the last second finals seat, while the MISO girls and MHS Lady Dolphins completed yesterday's last semifinals pairing.

The finals and consolation game tip off this afternoon at the MHS Gym starting at 3pm with the girls consolation match followed at 4:30pm with the girls finals. The boys consolation takes place at 6pm followed at 7:30pm by the boys finale.

BOYS DIVISION

MISO 71 – Dela Rosa 15, Desebel 14, Cenir 12, Ichihara 10, Cadiang 7, Darag 5, Castro 4, Del Rosario 2, Villanueva 2

Red Impulse 61 – Suda 28, Nakamura 12, Ito 7, Dei 6, Hashimoto 4, Sakaguchi 2, Yamashita 2.

GIRLS DIVISION

Red Impulse 101 – Oida 15, Iwasaki 14, R. Hashimoto 11, Nakaoka 9, Oshima 8, N. Hashimoto 7, Miyaura 7, Yamasaki 7, Hwang 6, Ueshima 6, Iwamoto 5, Maeike 2.

COPSSA 41 – Lebria 14, Cristobal 9, R. Kautz 9, Fernandez 4, M. Kautz 3, Demapan 2.

SURVIVORS

From Page 28

6-5. Meanwhile, the Jets edged out the Ol'Aces, 3-2, on Saturday and IT&E defeated the Bank of Saipan Red Sox, 10-3, last Sunday.

Survivors 6, Ol'Aces 5

Survivors hit the board first in the bottom of the opening frame when Jeremy Lizama reached off a one-out triple and scored off an error.

The Ol'Aces went 1-2-3 to start the second and the Survivors went ahead, 4-0, in the bottom frame off an RBI single by Phillip Sablan and errors; Survivors drew three walks in the inning.

After both teams came up empty in the third, the Ol'Aces finally touched the plate in the top of the fourth.

Virolanson Secharmidal reached off an error and later stole home. At the start of the fourth, Survivors' Jeremy Lizama was called to the mound in relief for Jeffrey Lizama.

Survivors then went ahead, 6-1, in the bottom frame off an RBI triple by Jeremy Lizama, who was driven in by Paul Celis in the next at bat.

The Ol'Aces then pulled within a run, 4-5, in the top of the fifth off an error, an RBI single by Secharmidal, and a two-RBI smash by Mike Muna.

After the damage, the Survivors tapped Jose Lizama to relieve Jeremy Lizama on the mound to close the last two outs.

Survivors' bats cooled off for the remainder of the contest, but pitcher Jose Lizama stayed true on the mound, striking out the side in the sixth and closing the final frame in just five batters.

Jets 3, Ol'Aces 2

The Jets drew first blood in the bottom of the second inning with a run off an error.

The Ol'Aces answered with a pair of runs in the top of the third inning.

Oscar Stefano got beamed and scored off an error, while teammate Secharmidal reached off a fielder's choice and scored off an error.

The Jets managed to tie the game at 2-all in the bottom frame with a run off an error.

Two and a half innings later, the Jets took the lead with a run off another error and held on to close the last three outs.

Wining pitcher Bret Halstead went the distance and allowed zero earned runs off three hits, five walks, and a bean ball with five strikeouts.

IT&E Fielders 10, Red Sox 3

The Red Sox struck first in the top of the opening frame with a pair of runs off an error and a wild pitch.

Then after three and a half scoreless innings, IT&E Fielders went ahead, 4-2, in the bottom of the fifth frame.

Red Sox went 1-2-3 to start the sixth and IT&E added six more runs to its lead in the bottom frame. The first three runs came off errors before Kobby Kaipat belted a two-RBI single followed by an RBI base knock by Zack Sasamoto.

Red Sox only managed a run in its final stand.

Winning pitcher Keene Guerrero went all seven and allowed an earned run off two hits, three walks, and a bean ball with six punch-outs.

IT&E's Khobby Kaipat batted 2-for-4 with three RBIs, a run, and two stolen bases. Teammate Davin Ada batted 2-for-3 with two runs, a base on balls, and three stolen bases.

In a related story, the Top 4 Saipan Little League Home Run Derby place finishers in each division all received trophies in addition to the prizes that were handed out last Friday afternoon at Tan Ko field.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
y-Boston	51	21	.708	–
Philadelphia	37	36	.507	14 1/2
New York	35	38	.479	16 1/2
New Jersey	23	49	.319	28
Toronto	20	53	.274	31 1/2

Southeast Division

x-Miami	51	22	.699	–
x-Orlando	47	26	.644	4
x-Atlanta	42	32	.568	9 1/2
Charlotte	30	42	.417	20 1/2
Washington	17	55	.236	33 1/2

Central Division

y-Chicago	53	19	.736	–
Indiana	32	42	.432	22
Milwaukee	29	43	.403	24
Detroit	26	47	.356	27 1/2
Cleveland	14	58	.194	39

WESTERN CONFERENCE

SOUTHWEST DIVISION

x-San Antonio	57	16	.781	–
x-Dallas	52	21	.712	5
New Orleans	42	32	.568	15 1/2
Memphis	41	33	.554	16 1/2
Houston	38	35	.521	19

Northwest Division

x-Oklahoma City	48	24	.667	–
Denver	44	29	.603	4 1/2
Portland	42	31	.575	6 1/2
Utah	36	38	.486	13
Minnesota	17	57	.230	32

Pacific Division

y-L.A. Lakers	53	20	.726	–
Phoenix	36	36	.500	16 1/2
Golden State	32	42	.432	21 1/2
L.A. Clippers	29	45	.392	24 1/2
Sacramento	20	52	.278	32 1/2

x-clinched playoff spot
y-clinched division

Yesterday's Games

Sacramento 114, Philadelphia 111, OT
Memphis 111, San Antonio 104
Atlanta 99, Cleveland 83
Miami 125, Houston 119
Boston 85, Minnesota 82
Oklahoma City 99, Portland 90
Golden State 114, Washington 104
L.A. Lakers 102, New Orleans 84
Dallas 91, Phoenix 83

ARNOLD PALMER INVITATIONAL SCORES

ORLANDO, Florida (AP) – Final scores Sunday at the Arnold Palmer Invitational, a $6 million PGA tournament played at the par-72, 7,419-yard Bay Hill Club & Lodge:

FINAL ROUND

Martin Laird (500), $1,080,000	70-65-70-75–280
Steve Marino (300), $648,000	71-67-71-72–281
Justin Rose (145), $312,000	72-72-70-68–282
Marc Leishman (145), $312,000	73-72-66-71–282
David Toms (145), $312,000	74-67-69-72–282
K.J. Choi (95), $208,500	72-64-76-71–283
Spencer Levin (95), $208,500	66-70-71-76–283
Sergio Garcia (85), $186,000	73-68-73-70–284
Mark Wilson (75), $162,000	74-72-70-69–285
Fredrik Jacobson (75), $162,000	71-71-73-70–285
Jim Furyk (75), $162,000	74-69-71-71–285
Edoardo Molinari (0), $94,800	72-75-72-67–286
Aaron Baddeley (54), $94,800	76-69-72-69–286
Ian Poulter (54), $94,800	71-71-73-71–286
D.J. Trahan (54), $94,800	72-71-72-71–286
Stewart Cink (54), $94,800	76-71-68-71–286
Rod Pampling (54), $94,800	73-72-70-71–286
J.J. Henry (54), $94,800	75-70-69-72–286
Heath Slocum (54), $94,800	75-70-68-73–286
Brian Davis (54), $94,800	70-72-71-73–286
Kyle Stanley (54), $94,800	74-73-66-73–286
Ryan Moore (54), $94,800	74-67-71-74–286
Trevor Immelman (54), $94,800	72-71-68-75–286
Tiger Woods (45), $48,600	73-68-74-72–287
Brian Gay (45), $48,600	75-68-71-73–287
Phil Mickelson (45), $48,600	70-75-69-73–287
Charlie Wi (45), $48,600	73-74-66-74–287
John Senden (45), $48,600	71-72-68-76–287
Bubba Watson (45), $48,600	70-71-68-78–287
Johnson Wagner (38), $34,875	74-72-73-69–288
Kevin Na (38), $34,875	74-73-72-69–288
Tom Gillis (38), $34,875	73-70-73-72–288
Bo Van Pelt (38), $34,875	74-70-72-72–288
Sam Saunders (0), $34,875	74-73-69-72–288
Nick O'Hern (38), $34,875	73-70-72-73–288
Dicky Pride (38), $34,875	77-66-71-74–288
Rickie Fowler (38), $34,875	69-71-70-78–288
Robert Allenby (29), $23,400	79-69-71-70–289
Scott Verplank (29), $23,400	76-69-72-72–289
William McGirt (29), $23,400	73-68-75-73–289
Brendan Steele (29), $23,400	76-70-71-72–289
Pat Perez (29), $23,400	74-74-68-73–289
Troy Matteson (29), $23,400	72-73-70-74–289
Hunter Mahan (29), $23,400	69-69-75-76–289
Brendon de Jonge (29), $23,400	71-71-70-77–289
Charles Howell III (29), $23,400	73-65-73-78–289
Kevin Streelman (21), $15,411	75-73-72-70–290
Lee Janzen (21), $15,411	70-73-75-72–290
Charl Schwartzel (21), $15,411	76-72-70-72–290
Daniel Chopra (21), $15,411	70-72-75-73–290
Zach Johnson (21), $15,411	76-70-70-74–290
Henrik Stenson (21), $15,411	73-71-71-75–290
J.B. Holmes (21), $15,411	73-69-72-76–290
Chad Campbell (17), $13,860	72-75-72-72–291
Vaughn Taylor (17), $13,860	70-68-76-77–291
Erik Compton (0), $13,500	75-67-80-70–292
Bill Lunde (14), $13,500	73-70-76-73–292
Robert Garrigus (14), $13,500	71-75-73-73–292
D.A. Points (14), $13,500	73-71-72-76–292
Carl Pettersson (11), $13,140	75-73-75-70–293
Chris Couch (11), $13,140	70-71-71-81–293
Robert Damron (8), $12,780	73-72-73-76–294
Billy Hurley III (0), $12,780	71-75-72-76–294
Arjun Atwal (8), $12,780	72-72-72-78–294
Hunter Haas (8), $12,780	70-73-73-78–294
Stephen Ames (4), $12,360	75-69-76-75–295
Jason Dufner (4), $12,360	70-70-78-77–295
Rocco Mediate (4), $12,360	70-72-75-78–295
Colt Knost (2), $12,120	75-73-72-76–296
Skip Kendall (1), $11,940	75-73-75-75–298
Ernie Els (1), $11,940	75-72-73-78–298
Roland Thatcher (1), $11,760	74-74-78-74–300
Paul Goydos (1), $11,640	78-69-76-85–308

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TINIAN

From Page 28

The trio of Mark Ma and brothers Luke and Robin Lu went undefeated in five games to top the team event. Saipan A's Budhi Gurung, Jean Shi, and Korean Table Tennis Association on Saipan president T.W. Park finished second with a 4-1 record, while Tinian B's Charlie Cheng, Su Yong Dong, Liang Wei Bin, and Alfred Yue rounded out the Top 3 after finishing with a 3-2 slate.

Guam's Arman Burgos, Edwin Cadag, and Tony Huang placed fourth, followed by Saipan's B's Steven Gardiner, Steven Lim, and David Yang, and Saipan C's B. Y. Ahn, Yong Gon Kim, and B.Y. Kim.

Tinian secured its second title after Ma and Luke Lu defeated Gurung and Shi in the doubles finals in five sets. The Tinian duo won the first two sets, 11-8, 11-9, but failed to wrap up the match when Shi and Gurung bounced back in the next two sets, 11-7, 11-3. Then in the deciding fifth set, Ma and Luke Lu prevailed, 11-3, to clinch the championship. The Tinian pair advanced to the finals after beating Saipan's Lim and Park in the semis, 11-4, 11-7, 11-5. Gurung and Shi foiled an all-Tinian doubles finals after downing Cheng and Robin Lu in the other semis game.

In the singles event, Ma was still at it, as he survived S.Y. Noh in five sets. Ma and Noh split the first two sets that were played in extended minutes. Ma won the first set, 12-10, but Noh took the second one, 14-12. Noh smelled blood when she claimed the third set, 11-9, but Ma avoided an upset after sweeping the last two sets, 11-8, 13-11.

The Tinian singles champion gained an entry to the finals after sweeping Shi, 11-6, 11-8, 11-9. Noh stunned Luke Lu in the other semis match, 13-11, 11-8, 8-11, 11-7, to set up a Saipan vs. Tinian singles finals.

10 teams join MHS Rocball League

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Ten teams will be vying for the championship in the Marianas High School Rocball League, which kicked off yesterday at the MHS Gymnasium.

The list includes Dude, Rockers, Team Glo, Team 7, You've Got Served, Hi-5, Roccers, Alpha Q, Fil'Aces, and Home Town Kids.

Rocball creator James Feger said the league will implement a round-robin format in the regular season for a total of 45 matches. Each game will be played in three sets and only the Top 4 teams will make it to the playoffs. Format for the playoff round will be decided later.

Then at the end of the league, players who scored the most kees, jams, goal, aces, and xunks will be recognized. The top scorer in the league will also be announced and named "Master Blaster.

India holds first tournament

Meanwhile, India became the second nation to play the sport indigenous to the CNMI.

According to Feger, India recently completed a three-day tournament this month and drew 57 teams or about 900 players from 16 different states.

Rocball Federation of India, which is led by Chetan Pagawad of Mumbai, hosted the competition in senior men and women, junior boys and girls, and sub-junior boys and girls. Officials from Sport Ministry of India, the National Interscholastic High Association, India Olympic Association, and the State Sport Associations attended the tournament played at the Rajeev Gandhi Stadium in Sidko, Aurangalad State.

After the first tournament in India, Feger believes the sport will continue to grow in the South Asian country.

"A copyright license agreement was sent to the Rocball Federation of India to allow the sport of Saipan to be played within the borders of India. From recent communications, they are also requesting for more news releases about India's accomplishments and authority to expand 'Saipan's sport' to 15 to 20 countries," Feger said.

Rocball Federation of India officials join players for a group photo during a three-day tournament at the Rajeev Gandhi Stadium in Sidko, Aurangalad State.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Third-ranked M-Destroyers, seen here in a file photo, lost to Sniper Destroyers on the road in their SEDA Master division game at D'Pirates Bar & Grill last Wednesday.

Snipers, Ali'i Kamote's maintain pole positions

By WALTER CEPEDA-SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

Ali'i Kamote's of Jonny's Bar & Grill and Sniper Destroyers of Oleai Beach Bar & Grill remain in first place in Saipan Electronic Dart Association's Master and Tuesday B-League divisions.

The Sniper edged out M-Destroyers, 9-8, on the road at D'Pirates Bar & Grill last Wednesday and now hold a 58-27 record. M-Destroyers' Eric Durano scored a 160 High-In in the matchup.

Buddies' Bar & Grill's Black Stallions (53-32) and the M-Destroyers (40-45) are ranked second and third in the seven-team division.

Ali'i Kamote's, meanwhile, took down second-ranked Buddies' Salbahe (56-34), 10-5, at home last Tuesday and is pulling away from the pack in the standings with a 73-17 card.

In the matchup, Kamote's Peejay Naval scored a 160 High-In, while Salbahe's George Medina scored a 127 High-Out. Oleai's Matua's (48-42) is currently in third place in the eight-team field.

Notably, Kamote's Eric Pascual and Kaysie Aquino are ranked first and second in the individual statistics. Pascual is scoring 21.77 points per dart and 3.33 marks per round for a weighted average of 58.34, just ahead of teammate Aquino and his 56.39 weighted average.

Other Master results include last-ranked Buddies' Flying Dartsmen (41-61) knocking off Jonny's Elite (38-47), 9-8, in 15 games at home and the Black Stallions finishing strong and taking the last three games to pass the PIC Shooters (37-48) at Round Bar.

Other Tuesday B matchups include last place D'Pirates Duruzi (26-64) outlasting seventh-ranked Jonny's Samurai (31-59), 8-7, in a back-and-forth battle at home; Buddies' Black Pearls (40-50) upsetting Oleai's GCC Carpeters (41-49), 8-7, in 12 games in a home game; and D'Pirates Mixed Blood Shooters (45-45) defeating Matua's, 10-5, on the road.

Salalila cleans out SRCR March races

By WALTER CEPEDA-SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

Paul Salalila swept the 1/8 Nitro Truggy class, Electric Stock Short Course A-Main class, and Open Short Course class in Sunday's Saipan Radio Control Racers March races held at the track in As Lito.

Salalila was also the top qualifier in the Nitro Truggy and Short Course Open class races.

He beat out runner-up Jude "Butter" Dickinson Jr. and third place finisher Rodney Catalla in the Open Short Course event; all three racers drove Traxxas Slash cars.

Salalila's Kyosho STRR outpaced Catalla's runner-up Team Associated RC8T and third-ranked Jojo Sarcho's Mugen MBX6T in the Nitro Truggy race.

Dickinson won the pole in the Stock Short Course A-Main event, but settled for second place to Salalila, while Romel Isidro rounded out the third spot; all three racers drove Traxxas Slash cars.

In addition, Dickinson's Team Losi XXX-SCT won the Stock Short Course B-Main class race over top qualifier Paul Guerrero and third place driver Kurt Diaz; Guerrero and Diaz both drove Traxxas Slash cars.

There are over 20 active SRCR members who regularly take part in practices at the As Lito Track every Saturday from 2pm to 6pm.

The SRCR tries to hold a daylong monthly race—usually on Sundays from 9am to 5pm in their two racing classes. The novice class was added this month because of the additional turnout. The public is welcome to check out the track to learn more about the sport/hobby.

For more information, contact Rodney Catalla at 234-5911, 256-7119, or email drrc35@yahoo.com.

Saipan Radio Control Racers members pose for a group photo after the conclusion of last Sunday's monthly races at their track in As Lito.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Cruz, Villanueva win slots to 'Battle of Champions'

Only one slot is left for the VFW Post 3457 Battle of Champions 9-Ball Tournament after two more cue artists gained entry to the April 3 competition.

Joey Cruz and Rolly Villanueva claimed two of the last three berths after ruling their respective qualifying tournaments. Cruz topped the March 12 qualifier, prevailing over 15 other players, while Villanueva won the March 19 tournament against 11 other entries.

Cruz was at the lower half of the 16-player field and defeated Chester Hamoy in the first round. Then he edged James Wang in the next round to book a quarterfinals ticket against Martin Sablan. Cruz nailed his third victory after beating Sablan and then continued his winning run in the winner's bracket semis, following a triumph over Patrick Taitano. In the finals, Cruz was pitted against Jerry Soriano and the former won to qualify in the "Battle of Champions."

Soriano came from loser's bracket, as he dropped his first game against Wang. He then defeated Clifford Hamoy, Martin Sablan, and Patrick Taitano to set up a finals match against Cruz.

In the March 19 qualifier, Villanueva was also at the loser's bracket before winning over Chester Hamoy in the finals. Villanueva topped Gus Taitano in the first round and then beat Simon Kapileo next. For this third game, Villanueva thumped Soriano, but the winning run ended when the former bowed to Chester Hamoy in the winner's bracket semifinals.

Villanueva recovered from the loss when he downed Eric Caisip and completed the come-from-behind win after beating Chester Hamoy in a rematch. ***(Roselyn B. Monroyo)***

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Race, Loyola clinch doubles title

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Jeff Race and Peter Loyola survived Peter Loken and Lope Padilla in an intense championship game to secure the men's open doubles crown in the 11th Annual PIC Tennis Championships on Sunday at the Pacific Islands Club hard courts.

Loyola and Race won in three hotly contested sets, 6-4, 4-6, 6-3, showing poise in the homestretch after the heated match reached its boiling point in the fourth game of the deciding third set.

"We're relieved it was over and we won. Coach Jeff and I kept our cool and focus after that incident in the third set," Loyola said.

The 2010 Micronesian Games singles silver medalist was talking about the violation called against Padilla, forcing tournament director Dennis Tababa to step in the court and halt the match for a few minutes as opposing camps pleaded their cases.

The incident started when Padilla hit a strong forehand from the backline and roared. Loyola rushed near the net, but failed to return the shot. Race contended Padilla committed a violation when he grunted with the ball still in play and Loyola had yet to hit it. Padilla argued against Race's claim and the two traded words at center court for a few minutes before Tababa stepped in and ordered a re-start with

See **RACE** on **Page 26**

Peter Loyola, left, and Jeff Race bang knuckles after scoring a point in the third set of their men's open doubles title game against Peter Loken and Lope Padilla in the PIC tournament on Sunday at the Pacific Islands Club hard courts.
ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Tinian sweeps ping-pong goodwill tourney

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Tinian is back on top after dominating the 15th MATTA Goodwill Table Tennis Tournament held over the weekend at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Tinian, which relinquished the overall championship against the Koreans in the same goodwill tournament in November, this time swept the team, singles, and doubles events against Saipan and Guam teams. A group of Koreans was originally scheduled to join the tournament, but pulled out at the last minute.

See **TINIAN** on **Page 26**

Luke Lu, seen here serving during the goodwill tournament in November last year at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium, joined forces with Mark Ma and brother Robin to lift Tinian A to the championship in the team event of last weekend's goodwill ping-pong competition.
ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Settsu Red Impulse's Haruna Oshima, right, battles COPSSA All-Stars' Carey Demapan during their semis game in the Settsu-Saipan caging yesterday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.
WALTER CEPEDA-SUTHERLAND

Survivors, Jets, IT&E Fielders prevail

By WALTER CEPEDA-SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

The BTS Survivors, Saipan Shipping-Pacific Amusement Jets, and IT&E Fielders all came out on top of their recent Junior Division matchups as the 2011 Saipan Little League Baseball season continued at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

The Survivors held off a late rally by the CTSI Ol'Aces last Thursday and sealed the win,

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Saipan Shipping-Pacific Amusement Jets' Kent Kalen Jr. takes a cut in their Junior League game against the CTSI Ol'Aces at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield last Saturday.
WALTER CEPEDA-SUTHERLAND

MISO boys, Settsu girls advance to championship

By WALTER CEPEDA-SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

The Marianas Interscholastic Sports Organization Boys All-Stars and Japan's Settsu Red Impulse girls squad advanced to today's finals after coming out on top of their respective semifinals in the 2011 Settsu-Saipan Friendship Basketball

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